

**Executive Report to Full Council – 5 December 2013**

**Leader – Councillor Elaine Woodburn**

**Copeland Community Fund**

The Fund has commissioned an independent review of its delivery which will report back to the Fund Board in December this year. Findings will be shared in the New Year through the Fund website.

**Managing Waste**

Consideration of the best approach to siting a geological disposal facility continues with DECC consulting over a revised siting process. All members have been invited to engage in workshop events and a presentation by DECC to provide information about the process. Members and officers have attended events arranged by DECC for stakeholders and local authorities. The Council's response to this consultation is in the course of preparation, in time for the deadline of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

**Nuclear New Build**

The decisions relating to electricity pricing for new nuclear development at Hinkley in Somerset, has prompted further discussion with Nugen, in anticipation of further details of proposals for the development emerging over the coming months. Significantly this has in turn prompted review of a draft Planning Performance Agreement which will hopefully be signed shortly. The Agreement will help to provide the resources needed to enable the Council to play a full and active role in the development process for the new power station.

Progress with new build has impacted on the consultation over associated connection to the national grid. Consultation over proposed routes has now been targeted for possible dates in spring 2014.

**Strategic Nuclear and Energy Board**

John Clarke and Tony Price – the Chief Executive Officer of the NDA and Managing Director of Sellafield have been invited to address a meeting of SNEB on 6 December 2013. Members of SNEB had extended this invitation some time ago in order to consider the response of the NDA and Sellafield Limited to comments of the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee, and the consequent recommendations contained within Treasury Minutes. Whilst it has taken some time to arrange, timing of this discussion is now beneficial to explore whether recommendations with targets for late 2013 are being achieved.

### **Off shore wind – Walney Extension**

The development consent order process for the large scale extension to the Walney wind farm has reached the stage where the proposals are considered by Inspectors appointed to report to the Secretary of State at issue specific hearing in the New Year.

### **Finance and HR Portfolio – Councillor Gillian Troughton**

#### **Human Resources**

The new HR manager, shared with Allerdale, has been appointed; Zoe Pluckrose started in post at the end of September

#### **Pensions**

Officers and the portfolio holder attended the annual Cumbria Pensions Forum on 18 November 2013. Following the meeting they had an individual meeting with the scheme actuary to discuss Copeland's position. A number of scenarios are now being worked up by the actuary to provide information as to the financial commitment to be made as regards the historic deficit recovery plan.

#### **Contracts & Property**

The term contracts for electrical, mechanical and building have been let. Good discussions have been had with chosen providers regarding the use of local labour and the development of apprenticeships in conjunction with Lakes College.

#### **Finance**

The budget consultation went out on Friday 8 November as planned. The Statutory Accounts have been closed and the Auditor has given an unqualified audit opinion.

### **Transition and Performance Portfolio – Councillor Allan Holliday**

A revised Corporate Plan, setting out the mission and priorities for the Council in 2013-2015 was agreed at Full Council in February. A second quarterly report has been compiled and sets out the Council's performance in relation to its three priorities. These are:

- **Deliver efficient and effective statutory services**
- **Be an effective public service partner so we can get the best deal for Copeland**
- **Working in partnership with communities**

Whilst our operating conditions remain difficult, the report demonstrates how our teams continue to strive to deliver key services and a range of projects on behalf of the people of Copeland.

### **Community Planning Portfolio – Councillor George Clements**

#### **Housing**

The Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 has been approved by Executive, the housing options team and partners are now concentrating on completing the actions identified.

A severe weather emergency protocol has been developed for 2013-2014, if there are any rough sleepers in Copeland and the temperature drops to below zero for three consecutive nights they will be placed in temporary accommodation until the weather improves (i.e. above zero degrees).

The rough sleepers estimate was completed in November; numbers will be validated by Homeless Link in December. I would like to thank all of the partners involved.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that we are now registered as a Home improvement Agency, Age UK are the lead partner. This means applications for external funding can be made to help and support residents, a handyperson scheme is already in place to help elderly residents who need small jobs completed within their properties, for example new locks fitted or light bulbs changed.

Discussions are on-going with adult social care regarding Disabled Facilities Grants and improvements to the service. Adult social care are going to place an occupational therapist within the housing team to help and support applicants and to make sure the adaptations requested are practical and all other options have been considered for example it may be more appropriate to move home rather than extend a property.

#### **Planning Policy**

The Inspector's Report into Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document was received in September. The Inspector found the document to be sound. The report has subsequently been presented to a meeting of the LDF Working Party for approval enabling presentation to Full Council in December for adoption.

Work is now on going to produce a Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The final report will form the evidence base to inform the draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document which will be the next and detailed stage of the Local Development Framework.

The potential to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for St Bees has been the subject of constructive discussion with St Bee's Parish Council and local residents supporting the concept of the plan. The matter currently rests with the Parish Council to consider the preferred way forward

## **Development Management**

### **Special Measures**

The Government continues to introduce a range of measures designed to remove bureaucracy and constraints on growth. These include using the time taken for the determination of major applications to assess whether to impose special measures which will ultimately place some decision making powers with the Planning Inspectorate rather than with the Council. To date only one council across the country has been placed in such a position, but there is increasing recognition of the tension between resources available for council's to fulfil statutory functions and expectation of the planning system to support and promote growth.

### **Proposed wind turbines – Weddicar Rigg**

The Inquiry into proposed wind turbines at Weddicar Rigg took place in July. The expected date for a decision has now slipped further into December 2013. Whilst this initially reflected emerging national policy, it is believed that further delay results from the increasing number of similar applications "called in" by the Secretary of State for his own consideration.

### **Use of former Marchon site for Biomass Crop Production.**

Planning permission has now been granted for the use of land at former Rhodia/Marchon site to produce a biomass crop. Growing medium – commonly soil excavated from development sites will be deposited on the site, to enable willow to be planted, harvested and used as a biomass fuel. The development re-uses the heavily contaminated site and opens access to additional open space, with links to coastal walks for local residents.

## **Community Regeneration Portfolio – Councillor Hugh Branney**

### **Regeneration**

#### **Copeland Pool Fitness Extension**

The project is progressing with the council appointing QS services and working closely with our leisure contractor North Country Leisure in preparing the tender for the capital works. The build timetable will see the new fitness suite completed by the end of June 2013.

#### **Old Town Townscape Heritage Initiative**

The Whitehaven THI is progressing with recruitment of an externally funded part time worker to manage the initiative, formal permission to start in place from Heritage Lottery

Fund. The THI has received a first draft application from one of the priority buildings, the Whitehaven YMCA.

### **Socio Economic**

We have been active in developing the framework for the BEC Social Investment Fund. The Council is finalising its proposal of evidenced priorities which will access resources from this fund from April 2014 to benefit local residents. We continue to meet with nuclear partners on supply chain issues and are focusing particularly around employment and skills gaps in local provision in line with meeting nuclear sector business needs. This work is extending from engaging with Sellafield Ltd and its supply chain, to LLWR.

### **LEP Strategic Economic Plan**

We continue to contribute to the development of the LEP Plan which is required to access both European Investment resources and to form the base for a negotiation with Government on Local Growth funding. We are working to ensure West Cumbria and Copeland priorities in particular are core within countywide documentation. The LEP Rural Growth Hubs are moving forward in Cleator Moor and Millom, with premises at PEC in Cleator Moor now operational and the development of new premises to house the Growth Hub in Millom well underway, led by Millom Network Centre.

### **Youth Engagement**

Our Youth Forums have all been meeting and discussing growth within Copeland and we have run the first of our democracy sessions in local schools towards engaging young people in their community and local regeneration priorities.

### **Localities**

All our Community Partnerships are refreshing their local Action Plans and have held Growth discussions to inform the refresh and to feed into the Copeland and LEP processes.

### **Copeland Community Safety Strategic Assessment**

The West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership (CSP) produces an annual strategic assessment which it then uses to evidence priorities for intervention and develop its annual action plan. The annual district summary for Copeland has been released in November 2013 and highlights the following:

- Crime in Copeland has fallen by 9.9% in the past year, the greatest fall in the County;
- Alcohol misuse evidenced by hospital admissions continues to rise and the rates for those aged under 18 is the second worst in all England however alcohol specific mortality rates are falling and below national and county levels;
- Copeland has been the only district in the County to experience a rise in ASB, this is after a significant fall the year before;
- Hate crime has increased by 72.2%, i.e. 18 incidents to 31;

- Domestic violence has increased and the trend of year on year increases in repeat cases continues;
- Whitehaven town centre is our main hot spot for crime including ASB with over double the number of incidents of crime than any other ward;
- Males between 18 and 30 years of age commit the most crimes in the borough, whereas victims of crime are typically females in this age group;
- As in previous years crime and disorder in Copeland was most prevalent in relatively deprived areas in the north of the borough;
- Burglary of a dwelling levels have fallen by over 35% with other levels of acquisitive crime also falling.

The CSP continues to see a connection between alcohol consumption and crime within our borough, this is particularly evidenced in the prevalence of incidents in Harbour ward and other deprived wards in the Whitehaven area. Reducing the level of re-offending remains a priority across Cumbria for adults and young people as does improving domestic violence detection rates and access to services. A focus on tackling ASB continues to remain a priority for Copeland. The CSP is focusing attention on these continuing crime and disorder issues through its current action plan and will be working to update this plan for 2014 interventions.

### **Environment Portfolio – Councillor Peter Kane**

#### **Fuel Savings**

Copeland was the first local authority in the country to introduce electric bin lifts to its waste collection fleet early in 2012. Three vehicles were fitted with the new, battery powered, bin lifting equipment and have now been used to collect refuse and green waste from homes across the Borough for the last eighteen months.

Manufacturer's trials carried out on this relatively new product suggested fuel reductions of between 8 and 14% per vehicle were possible. While the lifts are more costly than the traditional alternative fuel savings would help to reduce revenue costs and be better for the environment than traditional lifting equipment. With the 18 months of data now available analysis has confirmed the cost saving for each vehicle to be in excess of £11,500 over their seven year lifespan. This amounts to a fuel saving of almost 10% for each vehicle when compared to a traditional vehicle and justifies the investment in the new technology.

Additional unanticipated benefits have also been found in that the lifts are much quieter than traditional ones powered off the main diesel engines and the 'cycle time' of the equipment is quicker increasing productivity.

#### **United Utilities surface water charges**

The Council was notified earlier in the year that United Utilities would be introducing surface water charges for Parks and Cemeteries from April 2014. The charges would apply to surface water discharges into United Utilities drainage system and could have a potential

impact of circa £20,000 per annum. We have recently been notified that the charges have been deferred until April 2016.

The Parks and Environmental Health team are working with United Utilities to reduce the potential charges. This by surveying the sites to provide evidence that surface water is not discharged into United Utilities assets, under which circumstances the charges cannot be levied, and by looking at alternative drainage methods to manage surface water more sustainably. The delay in introducing charges helpfully gives officers a longer period of time to mitigate any adverse impacts on the Council's budget.

### **Cumbria Health And Well Being Board - Smokefree Play Grounds**

Copeland will be supporting Cumbria Health and Well Being Board (HWB) request for borough and district councils and housing providers to encourage play areas to be smoke free by displaying voluntary no smoking zone signs. No smoking in play areas helps to reduce the number of times that young children see people smoke so reducing the normalisation of smoking and helping to dissuade young people from taking up smoking.

The Council manages 23 play areas and as part of contract with Home Group we cover 8 more. In addition there are a 7 Parish Council whose play areas the parks team look after where we may be able to introduce the signage.

Smoking is a key theme for the Health and Well Being strategy as it is the single biggest cause of preventable death in Cumbria, as well a major cause of many long term conditions such as heart disease and strokes which affect quality of life and contributes to health inequalities as smoking rates are known to be higher in deprived areas.

Recent surveys have shown 70 per cent of people in Cumbria would support a ban on smoking in children's play areas.

Health and Well Being Boards are required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 as part of arrangements to move responsibility for some health matters including preventative work from the NHS to local authorities. The Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board have representatives from the NHS including Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), district councils, Cumbria Association of Local Councils, the Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, the third sector, and the county council.