

## **Executive Report to Full Council – 8 December 2009**

### **Transformational Leadership**

#### **CP Improve our financial management – Councillor E Woodburn**

##### **Budget Preparation**

Budget preparation for 2010/11 is continuing. Resources Planning Working Group met on 7<sup>th</sup> January to continue the development of the budget proposal which will be considered by Council in March. The budget presentation provided by the Head of Finance and MIS on 2<sup>nd</sup> December provided a context to the budget process and copies of the presentation were circulated to Members after the December Council meeting.

##### **Internal Audit – Shared Services Business Case -**

Members will be aware that a business case setting out a proposal for sharing internal audit services, with the County Council acting as host, was agreed in principle at December's Audit Committee. Modest savings can be achieved from the arrangement, but the benefits in improving the resiliency and robustness of the service and the opportunities for staff development and retention, as part of a team operating at a critical mass, were supported by the Committee. The final business case, involving Copeland, Carlisle City and the County Council will be considered by Executive in February.

#### **CP Improve our performance – Councillor J Bowman**

##### **Annual Audit Letter**

Councillors will have received a copy of the Annual Audit Letter which summaries the findings from our 2008/09 audits. The report recognises the significant progress we have made with our financial statements and the Audit Commission issued an unqualified opinion on the accounts, which was a significant achievement.

The letter also identified areas where we still need to improve and emphasis was put on the need to ensure we agree a workforce strategy and a plan will be ready by March 2010 to aid this development.

There is still need for improvements but we should identify the positives and celebrate the work that has gone in to getting the Council to an improved position.

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

### **Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS)**

The first Stakeholder Organisations Workshop of the West Cumbrian Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009 in Whitehaven. Almost 100 organisations were invited with 40 stakeholders attending. The objectives of the meeting were:-

- To help stakeholders develop their understanding of the MRWS process, the national context and how it is being managed in West Cumbria
- To build the Partnership's understanding of stakeholder organisations views about the MRWS process
- To get feedback on the Partnership's work to date and plans ahead, particularly the Terms of Reference, criteria, work programme and Public & Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Presentations, followed by question and answer sessions were given by DECC, the local authorities and the Partnership. The purpose of these was to help all stakeholders get up to speed with the wider MRWS process, how the three Principal Authorities (Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council) made expressions of interest in the Government process and details of the Partnership which has been set up by the three councils to recommend whether or not West Cumbria should make a decision to participate in the Government siting process.

Stakeholders were asked to identify their key issues about MRWS for West Cumbria. Many different issues were discussed including;

- How to engage and communicate with the local community
- Clarity as to what the community benefits package might look like, in addition to the infrastructure that would be required to construct and run a repository
- How to ensure the credibility of the Partnership
- Satisfaction of safety, monitorability and retrievability concerns
- Clear and well publicised criteria for site identification.

### **The Partnership.**

Stakeholders were then asked to give their views on the Partnership, its establishment, what its priorities should be, its Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) and also its credibility. Views reflected the key issues identified above with advice to the Partnership from the stakeholders including to

- Ensure it engages widely so that everyone in the area is knowledgeable on the issue and people feel involved and represented
- Manage perceptions by explaining why the Partnership sees itself as credible, and being careful of its words and behaviour about the possibility of proceeding in the Government's MRWS process.
- Continue to work to include wider interest groups such as Non Governmental Organisations (e.g. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth), tourist interests (e.g. B&Bs) and those that are socially excluded/ hard to reach groups, so that it can be confident that the outcomes of the process will fairly reflect the spectrum of views.
- Be open, honest and transparent about all its activities and decision-making process.

This input is being incorporated into the Partnership's work alongside the other ongoing engagement activities happening (public meetings, leaflet drops, media coverage etc) and will influence changes in the future operation and activity of the Partnership.

For more information, including the Partnership's Terms of Reference (ToR), work programme and PSE plan, please see the Partnership's website [www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk](http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk)

### **Cumbria Leadership Forum**

A new Cumbria Leadership Forum has been set up which will replace the Cumbria Local Authorities Strategic Board. Membership comprises of all leaders from the local authorities, Chair of the Lake District National Park, Chair of Cumbria NHS and Chair of the Police Authority. An initial meeting was held in December to discuss how the group would work, it was emphasised that the board must work on strategic issues and the chair will be rotating starting with the Leader of CCC.

The first formal meeting will take place in January with presentations from the Third Sector and the University of Cumbria.

### **CP- Improve our Performance – Councillor G Blackwell**

#### **Building Control Marketing**

The creation of the Building Act 1984 opened up the regulation of building work to private sector building control bodies. Copland's building control section have managed to maintain the vast majority of the building control market due to their remote location and a lack of high value projects. However, the recession has resulted in private sector bodies being forced to explore business opportunities in

new territories – these companies are profit orientated and have large promotional budgets with which to woo corporate customers. Taking into account the unparalleled number of high value projects being planned in the Copeland area in coming years, creating a professional brand for the Council’s building control section was considered as being essential, building upon the growing reputation of the section following the widely publicised achievement of Chartered Consultancy status in 2008.

Up until recent times, the building control section had provided the Council with many hundreds of thousands of pounds in surplus income. However, unlike other local authority offices, whose competition for work has been fiercer, Copeland’s building control section had never been given a marketing budget. Funding was requested and agreed through the 2009/10 budget setting process and Alcazar of Newcastle were asked to create a professional look for business cards, protective clothing, letter heading, forms, advertisements, web-pages, etc. Building control staff had input into the design and are extremely pleased with (and proud of) the end product.

It was made clear to Alcazar that the design was to be a sub-brand (Birmingham’s building control section for example are branded around their Chartered Consultancy) and the Copeland Crest will be side by side with this sub-brand on all relevant material:

The green of the logo implies sustainability/energy efficiency and links well with the ‘Britain’s Energy Coast’ theme. The overall concept is linked to an interdisciplinary/team approach to obtaining a common goal; sustainable, accessible and safe buildings.

Other authorities (including Allerdale BC) have previously invested heavily in the creation of one-off professionally designed glossy advertisements in an attempt to attract professional staff. Copeland Borough Council’s building control section now possess material that will serve them for many years, material which will help to ensure staff retention and, when required, staff recruitment – in comparison with its contemporaries, the section can now be seen as exciting, driven and forward thinking.

As an aside, Mark Key Building Control Manager has recently had his first book, “Sustainable Masonry Construction” published which will further enhance the reputation and commercial credibility of the section and the organisation.

## **Building Control Logo**



## **Improving Quality of Life**

### **CP - Improve access to council services – Councillor G Blackwell**

#### **MIS Headway Software System**

After a very intensive period of activity, Building Control, Development Control and Land Charges have all “Gone live” with the new software system. This new system brings a range of benefits to each service individually and enables the sharing of information to facilitate a better customer experience and modernise the way the Council works in these departments. Staff have really embraced the new software and have worked hard to make the installation of the new system and the phasing out of the old systems seamless. The purchasing of the software saw a significant investment by the Council of £287,000 and we look forward in the coming year to fully exploiting and utilising this new facility. Particular thanks to Mark Key (Project Manager) and Diane Parkinson (Project technical support) for their dedication to making this project a success.

### **CP - Improve the living environment – Councillor A Holliday**

#### **Landscape & Allotments.**

The recently established Midgey Ghyll allotment association will be working in partnership again with the Open Spaces department in early 2010 looking at how the allotment site can not only provide healthy produce for its tenants but also support local wildlife.

The intention is to identify an area of land on the allotment site off the Loop Road and plant this area up with trees and shrubs which will encourage a more diverse and varied fauna content into the site. It is hoped that by encouraging more birds and insects for example that this will aid pollination of fruit and control pests via the natural food chain. There is also the potential to hold small educational talks with school/community groups on how attracting wildlife into a small green space can benefit not only allotment holders but also school grounds and small residential gardens.

### **Enforcement.**

The enforcement unit will be working in partnership with the Home Group on the GAP Programme (Greenbank Aspiration Project), the project will run from the 11<sup>th</sup> January until the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010. This partnership will promote environmental awareness by discussing how to tackle and prevent graffiti, rubbish and broken glass. The dangers associated with dog fouling and how everyone can help to keep the open spaces and footpaths clear/clean will also be promoted.

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

### **Sports and Physical Activity Alliance - Netball Coach**

The Cultural Service department is pleased to report that the last funded post within the Copeland Sports and Physical Activity Alliance has been appointed. The Council currently employs two posts; the Rambling Co-coordinator and a Multi-Sports Coach. The final appointment is for a Netball Development Officer / Coach and this appointment is a partnership shared post with England Netball, the sports National Governing Body.

The post is funded for two years, with England Netball providing investment for two days a week and the Copeland SPAA making up the other three days. England Netball have invested in the post to lead the development of the sport across the County, providing support to clubs and working with community groups to recruit new players. The post will work intensively in Copeland for three days a week, targeting young women aged 16 to 24. This group has been identified as girls tend to stop participating in sport in the early teenage years and once out of the habit of taking part clubs find it very difficult to attract women back.

Within Copeland the post will work with schools and sixth form colleges as well as the leisure facilities and sports clubs to develop inclusive and exciting opportunities. The intention is to develop a structure of clubs and competitions across the borough.

## **CP - Increase quality of customer experience – Councillor H Branney**

### **Copeland Pool £215,000 Improvements.**

The Cultural Services department and Leisure Copeland has responded to customer feedback and sought funding to redevelop the Copeland Pool changing facilities. Cultural Services has worked with the DCMS and Sport England to attract £215,000 of funding. North Country Leisure Copeland has invested £20,000 to secure investment from the DCMS Free Swimming Programme Capital Fund.

The redevelopment will replace the existing aging facilities which are difficult and expensive to maintain with a unisex changing area which will allow more people to use the pool at any one time. This in turn should attract and retain more customers because of its higher quality. Currently the pool has separate male and female changing rooms which are difficult for families, school groups and community organisations to use. Having separate changing facilities increases the maintenance and cleaning costs, whilst the replacement with a single changing village will yield efficiencies in staff costs and provide a more flexible service to the customer. The change will allow approximately an extra 15,000 swimmers to use the pool.

Cultural Services and Leisure Copeland will be conducting customer consultation in January 2010 to ensure that all residents' opinions are taken into account. The new changing rooms are projected to be open to residents by September 2010, subject to funding approval.

## **Promoting Prosperity**

### **CP- Promote healthier lifestyles- Councillor Elaine Woodburn**

#### **West Cumberland Hospital Development**

The new website has finally been launched to keep patients, staff and the public informed about the £100 million redevelopment of the West Cumberland Hospital.

The website – [www.buildingyourhospital.ncuh.nhs.uk](http://www.buildingyourhospital.ncuh.nhs.uk) – has a wealth of information on this exciting project, which will see the biggest single investment in healthcare for West Cumbria in over half a century.

The new website explains the reasons behind the redevelopment and has artists' impressions of how the new hospital could look. It also contains information about the project to date and when future work is scheduled to take place, frequently asked questions, and the hospital's environmental aims. North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, is keen for staff, patients, the local community and other stakeholders to have as much input as possible into the project. Therefore people are being encouraged to use the website to send comments, ask questions and sign up for the regular email newsletters which are being issued.

The newsletters are being published regularly and distributed via email and on paper throughout West Cumbria. Suggestion boxes are available in the Reception Foyer at the West Cumberland Hospital with the open door policy Project Office located nearby.

A dedicated email account – [wchproject@ncumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:wchproject@ncumbria.nhs.uk) – has also been set up for staff and the public to pose any questions about the redevelopment.

The new hospital is scheduled to be completed by 2013. Work has already begun to decant areas of the hospital, ready for demolition to start early in the New Year.

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

#### **New Affordable Housing Development**

There continues to be an improvement in the number of new affordable housing completions per annum.

From a baseline of 22 completions in the year ending March 2009 in Whitehaven and Egremont, Housing Associations built another 28 affordable homes between April and December 2009 in Millom and Whitehaven. Planning permission and capital funding have also been obtained for a further 41 dwellings to be started in 2010 in Whitehaven.

There are further urban and rural schemes under careful examination at present in dispersed locations in the Borough and, subject to funding, we anticipate a further



increase in development. The Council plays a crucial role in encouraging and supporting Housing Association funding bids to the Homes & Communities Agency and we are working together to strengthen our partnership.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE TO COUNCIL**

None