

Executive Report to Full Council – 22 March 2011

Transformational Leadership

Budget Update - Councillor Elaine Woodburn

Budget 2011/12:

The Budget for 2011/12 was approved by full Council on 22nd February 2011. This included:

The Revenue Budget which was approved in the sum of £14,106,508 including the use of earmarked reserves of £2,619,000 giving a net budget to be funded of £11,487,508. This was funded from Government Grant of £7,207,678, Council Tax of £4,043,739 and General Reserves of £236,091. As part of this exercise the Council identified savings of over £1.7m on top of the £350,000 it had achieved during the year, which were necessary due to the cuts in funding from Government Grant.

The Capital Programme for 2011/12 was approved in the sum of £4,998,428

The Treasury Management and Investment Strategies.

The Audit Committee received some training from Sector Treasury Services (who advise the Council on their Treasury Management arrangements) at their meeting in early February and this was very well received. This training will therefore be repeated in June when the year-end Treasury management position will be known and the training will be widened to include other members.

The Council Tax for Copeland Borough Council for 2011/12 was frozen at 2010/11 levels

Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/12:

This sets out the strategy for the next four year period and is considered elsewhere on this agenda. During the next four year period, savings in the region of £4.5m will be required of which £1.7m have already been identified as part of the recent budget exercise.

Final Accounts 2010/11:

Work is now commencing to close down the 2010/11 Accounts. This the first year that the Council's Accounts will be prepared using International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and the workload for the Finance Team will increase because of the significant additional reporting requirements required to comply with IFRS.

Nuclear New Build – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

NuGeneration Ltd – the new consortium of Iberdrola S.A, GDF SUEZ S.A and Scottish & Southern Energy plc. that is progressing plans for a new nuclear power station on land adjacent to Sellafield held their launch event in January when they unveiled initial plans for taking forward the development of the site. They have also recently established a temporary office at Westlakes. Representatives of the company have been invited to a Members briefing on 7th April at 5:00pm in the Bainbridge Room.

Timescales for the project remain as previously reported. The focus for the company for the next 18 months will be on assessing whether or not the site can be built on for a nuclear reactor. The aim is to resolve all major planning issues before an investment decision is made in 2014 with a projected start on site date of 2016.

NuGeneration Ltd are also meeting with National Grid to ensure that up-grades to the electricity network are completed in time to be able to transmit power to the grid. Discussions between National Grid and Cumbria and Lancashire local authorities continue regarding proposals for enhancing the grid route through Cumbria. Initial work around strategic route options is underway and this will be the subject of a programme of consultation with the community regarding potential route options. This work is being undertaken by the Nuclear New Build Spatial Planning Group led by the Borough Council and including all Cumbria and Lancashire local authorities and the Lake District National Park Authority. This group is jointly considering the spatial implications of potential nuclear new build and potential grid route options and the means for ensuring the resources are in place for local authorities to be in a position to engage with the development consent process. Officials from National Grid are attending a Members briefing for the project on 24th March at 5:00pm in the Bainbridge Room.

In January the Council agreed a response to the Governments consultation on the draft National Policy Statements for Energy following a local stakeholder event attended by officials from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). The response supported the proposal to establish a new nuclear power station on a site adjoining the current Sellafield plant and accepted that the sites at Braystones and Kirksanton are taken out of the Nuclear NPS as potential sites for new nuclear power stations based on issues of visual intrusion and deliverability by 2025.

Successful Hosting of the Copeland Community Fund Delivery

The Council is reaching the end of its first year hosting the Fund Community Development Team. The Fund has now given out more than £1million in grants and assisted through grants and the community development team to enable projects to take place to a total value of £4.5 million. As a key partner in the Fund we have taken an enabling role including managing the community development resource. The following outcomes have been met by the fund over the past year:

- Development support to over 40 groups
- Enhancing joint working amongst development staff from all sectors to assist groups and projects in the community
- Helped 12 groups successfully apply for £393,695 of grants from external sources for projects totaling £926,934
- Provided £1,003,887 from the fund with match funding of £2,615,846
- Deliver a funding fair and range of consultation events

New Acute Hospital Project Update – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

The Hospital Trust has been revising the scheme details through a clinical strategy review process to ensure that the required facilities can be delivered within the available capital budget of £90 million. The revised scheme will form the basis of the Full Business Case to be presented to the Trust Board this month with an anticipated approval by the Department of Health in June 2011.

Work continues on programme with all the enabling works and it is planned that the decanting process will be complete by the end of May 2011 so that the start of the new build works can commence in July 2011. Subject to timely project approvals the new build works will be complete in December 2013.

Locality Working Update – Councillor John Bowman

Locality Working has been underway with the support of Copeland BC since September 2009. The Pilot Phase ran until March 2010 and in this last twelve months, the team has established strong links with four existing partnerships, who have agreed to embrace Locality Working, plus set up two new Locality partnerships, where arrangements didn't exist. The team has also worked with partners to put in place six Locality Plans, which are in a position to feed into Local Authority planning and open up dialogue with public, private and voluntary sector partners to meet local needs. In addition, the Localities Together group of Copeland partnerships has been established, with a clear link into the newly formed Copeland Partnership. Detailed achievements underpin much of this work.

Locality Working is now moving to the second phase, which sees the officer team continuing to work closely with communities reviewing and updating plans as new information becomes available and delivering against jointly identified priorities. Significantly the team now aims to embed the Locality planning process into Local Authority/Public sector service delivery and policy and performance monitoring towards seeing partners working closely with communities on locally identified priorities, making savings where possible by delivering against community needs.

In addition, the Locality Working team are working as part of the wider Copeland BC agenda to draw together a Community Engagement Strategy, based on good practice established in South Lakeland District Council and the County Council. On 4th March 2011, representatives from our Member Advisory Group, which draws members from across Copeland presented on the experience, learning and good

practice of the Copeland localities development at the Cumbria Improvement and Efficiency Partnership organised Cumbria Conference on Locality Working. The conference heard from both policy analysts on the Localism Bill and practitioners in Cumbria

Improving Quality of Life

Housing Update – Councillor George Clements

Housing Investment

With the Council's support the Home Housing Group have obtained funding this year for new affordable homes in Egremont and Millom. 22 two bedroom flats for rent are under construction on the site of Ehen Court, Egremont. Home Housing is also on site with 41 new homes at Grammerscroft, Millom. Completion is expected within 2011.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2010

The report is complete as required by government planning and housing guidance. It includes a comprehensive household survey comprising a representative sample of the urban settlements and 100% of rural. Response rates vary across the Borough but the overall rate was 18.6% with a peak of 36% in one settlement. The sample size was sufficient to be classified as "precise" by the Office of National Statistics. Headline findings are:

- Demographic projections demonstrate the need for more diversity in home support services for older people to enable them to remain living with safety in independent housing. There also needs to be a greater range of housing provision including new build marketed at older people and extra care sheltered housing.
- Overall, there is an annual shortfall of 168 lettings of affordable homes across the Borough. Of these, 153 are in the Copeland planning area and the remaining 15 in the National Park Authority's planning area. Up to 39% of people needing affordable housing showed an interest in intermediate tenures like shared ownership.
- 70 of the 168 annual new lettings required are needed in rural areas
- Open market housing supply (for conventional sale) is reasonably balanced across the Borough but there is a shortfall in detached properties (particularly in Whitehaven); semi-detached in Millom and bungalows in the Whitehaven and West Lakes market areas (West Lakes includes the national park area of Copeland).
- Household incomes in Copeland are quite polarised. Median incomes are £32,517 per annum but 36.7% of residents receive less than £300 per week, which is lower than £15,600 per annum.

The SHMA will become the evidence base for the Council's forthcoming Housing Strategy and its Local Development Framework.

Choice Based Lettings Scheme

The scheme is expected to go live this coming April under the brand name of Cumbria Choice. A pre-launch event is being planned in the Copeland Centre on 6 April.

Community Safety Partnership – Councillor Norman Williams

Community Safety Partnership Delivery Planning for 2011/12

West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership has been assisted in their delivery planning by a decision by the government to provide resources to Community Safety Partnerships across the country. This will result in £500,000 revenue grant from the Home Office to Cumbria. County wide projects will be funded through this resource with four key priorities for activity: domestic violence, integrated offender management, substance misuse and alcohol related violent crime. It is anticipated that a minimum of £52,000 will be available to the West Coast Community Safety Partnership to underpin our priorities from our strategic assessment work, reported previously to full council.

I completed my Chairmanship at the last meeting with the role for 2011/12 being decided by partnership nominations.

Promoting Prosperity

Copeland Future Jobs Fund Success - Councillor Cath Giel

Copeland Future Jobs Fund initiative commenced in October 2009 and was funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and Copeland's Working Neighbourhood Fund. Overall it has created 48 jobs for unemployed young people and these jobs have been geographically spread across Copeland. It is one of the few schemes in England to create jobs that offered 12 month contracts and this has been a major factor in its success. The majority of jobs created were in the Voluntary sector (32) and Public Sector (14). The majority of young people involved in the initiative have undertaken some form of training whilst in employment and these have been NVQ Level 2/3 including: Business Administration; ITQ; Customer Service and; Hospitality. Of those that left the scheme before the end of their contracts, a significant number have secured other full time or permanent employment or gone on to full time Higher Education. The Future Jobs has been a tremendous success and this was recognised in a positive audit exercise undertaken by DWP's Future Jobs Fund Grant Management Team in October 2010. The Programme will close down at the end of March 2011 when the final employee contracts expire.

Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative – Councillor Cath Giel

Following on from Copeland Future Jobs Fund the Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative aims to provide apprenticeship training opportunities whilst at the same time engage Copeland employers, primarily in the private sector. The Programme is open to unemployed individuals aged 16 and over. The scheme will be delivered by the Copeland Work and Skills Partnership and lead by Copeland Borough Council. Copeland Borough Council will assist in the management of the initiative and will have direct responsibility for the grant funding, reporting and monitoring. Lakes College West Cumbria will deliver the training element of the programme. Apprenticeship Frameworks will be available in areas such as: Construction; Retail; ITQ; Health & Social Care; Business Administration; Customer Service; and Hairdressing. It will be a 3 year programme with the first apprenticeships commencing in May 2011. Funding to deliver this initiative has been secured from the Copeland Working Neighbourhood Fund (via the WNF Commissioning Panel) and the Copeland Community Fund.

Copeland's Youth Forums - Councillor Hugh Branney

New Youth forums in Copeland are now being coordinated by our Youth Engagement Officer (Emma Dickinson). The forums have been created with the intention of giving a broad range of young people a platform to have a voice on issues that affect them, and to become actively involved in local decision-making. I should emphasise they are not intended to replace the youth forums in individual schools but are way of giving us the opportunity to engage with a wide range of partners and a diverse mix of young people over the long term.

Our Youth Forums have been aligned with locality working areas and there will be at least one forum in each of the six localities in Copeland. The locality Youth Forums will be informal, allowing young people to feel comfortable and able to talk openly about their views. As well as 6 youth forums meeting throughout Copeland the aim is to also have an overarching more formal Copeland Youth Council where representatives from all the forums will be elected onto. This will then feed into a Cumbria Youth Council offering Copeland young people a pathway to develop themselves and represent Copeland interests.

Meetings to date:

- The North East Copeland forum took place in January, 7 young people attended this meeting deciding that they would like to have meetings every 2 months. In this area Phoenix Youth and Community Project, Connexions, West Cumbria Carers and Children's services were involved.
- The Whitehaven Youth Forum took place in February, 12 young people attended deciding that they would like monthly meetings, Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project, Young Cumbria, West Cumbria Carers and Connexions were involved.

Planning Policy – Councilor Geoff Blackwell

The LDF Working Party meets on 21st March to discuss progress. One principal item is a revision of the Council's Local Development Scheme which sets out the full programme of work and documents to be prepared as part of the LDF. There are some delays as a result of later forecasts, new economic strategies and scenario-building work coming from partners and these need to be factored into the overall timetable. The Working Party's recommendations will be reported to the Executive on 5th April for a formal decision.

The Working Party agenda also includes scoping reports on two important Supplementary Planning Documents. One is a development brief on Whitehaven town centre and harbourside the other a framework document dealing with the Council's approach to Planning Contributions which can include community benefits packages, s106 agreements and a community infrastructure levy.

Another important issue in front of the Working Party is a consultation on relaxing permitted uses on King Street in Whitehaven. This is a suggestion from the Town Centre sub-group of the Whitehaven Locality Partnership as a means of encouraging re-use of vacant shops for non-retail, but nevertheless, related uses like cafes, restaurants and financial/professional services.

Copeland Coastal Initiative – Councillor Hugh Branney

The Copeland Coastal Partnership which forms part of the Council's Coastal Initiative will be launched at the end of May. The partnership aims to enhance and celebrate the coast for the benefit of local people, visitors and the local economy. The event will be an opportunity for potential partners that have an interest in the Copeland coast to sign up to the partnership and pledge their support for improving the coastal environment, sharing information regarding coastal activities and promoting the coast.

Quality Coast Award applications have been submitted to Keep Britain Tidy for the borough's four amenity beaches - Haverigg, Seascale, Silecroft and St. Bees. The successful Awards for the 2011 bathing season will be announced in May.

Beacon Update – Councillor Hugh Branney

Delivering a promise to the Council and external funders to keep the Beacon updated and fresh, the new Pop gallery opened on Saturday 19 February, celebrating popular culture in Copeland during the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. This includes fashion, toys, events and technology.

Joining the party on Saturday 19th was CFM Radio's Robbie Dee and the Alison Taylor Dance Academy. On Sunday 20th, an array of mini cars provided by Cumbria Classic Mini Club, celebrated the addition of a 1980s mini included in the gallery display.

The gallery has been entirely funded from a sinking fund holding surplus revenue generated at The Beacon since 2007/08 and is the first in three major gallery changes which were promised as part of The Beacon's five year Business Plan.

The Beacon and the new Pop gallery attracted over 2000 visitors during half term.