

Executive Report to Full Council

1. Corporate Improvement Plan

The Executive has recently agreed a Corporate Improvement Plan that sets out everything Copeland Council aims to achieve in 2009-10 - and all on one side of paper. The plan has been designed to be easy to read and understand, with clear targets for us to work towards. This one year plan fits with our 5 year Corporate Plan, which as colleagues know is our longer-term plan for Copeland. It is refreshed annually and contains the Council's objectives, targets and measures.

Recognising the importance of the plan it is our intention that the Executive report to Full Council aligns to this.

Transformational Leadership

2. CP Improve our Financial Management - Councillor E Woodburn

Accountancy Services are preparing the draft Statement of Accounts 2008/09 in accordance with statutory reporting deadlines. The Audit Committee, at its meeting of 3rd June, received a training presentation from the Head of Finance and MIS in relation to local authority year end financial reporting requirements as preparation for their meeting of 26th June where they will consider the draft accounts on behalf of the Authority.

3. CP Information Security Project – Councillor E Woodburn

Executive received a report at its meeting of 26th May which provided an update on the progress made to date to meet the current Government Code of Connection Compliance (COCO) to ensure access to Government extranet (GSCx network) by the deadline date of 30th Sept 2009. Government Connect will enable local authorities to share information between themselves, government departments and agencies and offers the opportunity to improve electronic communications between citizens and businesses too. It represents best practice for electronic data security. The action plan agreed by Executive is being implemented which includes revising the Information Security Policy, which will require approval by Full Council before the September deadline.

4. CP Work effectively with others to meet the needs of Copeland – Councillor E Woodburn

As colleagues know CBC made a without commitment Expression of Interest (EOI) to open discussions with Government on the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility at some point in the future. The EOI made a clear commitment to the setting up of a wide partnership which will collect and consider the information upon which the decision to formally participate or not will be made.

The partnership, which is now a West Cumbria Partnership, and open to the public, has now met three times and is gathering information which will help shape its future recommendations. It has considered topics such as waste and radioactivity, environment and regulation, international experience and other such topics and which will help participants build their understanding of the MRWS context and process.

A communication/engagement/information programme will shortly be produced to ensure communities have access to information as and when they need it and a budget requirement has been submitted to DECC to secure the funds needed to carry out the engagement programme.

The Partnership is also tasked to agree when the British Geological Society will carry out its desktop study on West Cumbria, it has not, as yet, agreed to this taking place.

A steering group made up of representatives from CBC, West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group, Union, CALC and Allerdale Borough Council are meeting in between the full partnership meeting to implement actions agreed at the meeting.

Promoting Prosperity

5. CP Improve local environmental sustainability – Councillor G Blackwell

The Council has published an Issues and Options report as the first formal stage of producing its Local Development Framework (LDF). The document explores a range of planning policy matters looking particularly at the implications of climate

change, the regeneration needs of the Borough related to Britain's Energy Coast and the issues around new nuclear development. All members have received a copy of the document as have many other local stakeholders and consultee bodies. There is a direct link to the report and associated response questionnaires on the Home page of the Councils web site. Over 400 individuals and organisations have been alerted to the consultation, which lasts until the 10th July.

Work this month has also begun on an Infrastructure Plan which is a major item in the evidence base to support the LDF. It will assess the general state of all infrastructure in the Borough including physical infrastructure such as transport and utilities but also social elements such as health, education and emergency services plus green issues such as open space and flood prevention and cultural / leisure items such as libraries and historic buildings. Having established a picture of the extensions / improvements it will move on to look at the requirements of new development brought forward as part of the LDF documents. The plan will take about 6 / 9 months to complete and is concurrent with the development of the LDF documents.

6. CP Help facilitate the delivery of the Energy Coast Master Plan to deliver a strong diverse economy – Councillor C Giel

West Cumbria Vision Board – Previous reports have covered the role of Westlakes Renaissance and the decision to create a fit for purpose delivery organisation for West Cumbria. To that end West Cumbria Vision was created and launched at the end of April with the first board meeting taking place on the 26th July 2009. The board has an independent Chairman in the person of former Energy Minister Brian Wilson, Independent Members and representatives from CBC, ABC, CCC, Cumbria Vision, NWDA and LDNP.

The mission of the West Cumbria Vision Board is to assist in the delivery of strategic projects identified in Britain's Energy Coast Masterplan and to act as a vessel for channeling funding from Nuclear Management Partners, Sellafield Ltd, NWDA and others towards those projects that deliver maximum benefit to our local communities and lay the foundations for bigger and better things.

7. CP Regeneration of Whitehaven Town Centre – Councillors C Giel / E Woodburn

Members should recall that the overall strategy for the development of Whitehaven Town Centre is based on creating clusters of development focused on new public spaces of high quality. The aim is to reinforce and strengthen the existing or emerging character of these areas to create distinctive urban 'quarters'

Albion Square Development – This project is well underway with discussions being held with the two business owners.

The design and development pre qualification questionnaire was requested by over 150 consortia, and on issuing the Invitation to Tender over 35 consortia applied. This was narrowed down to 7 consortia which resulted in over 25 consultants visiting Whitehaven from all over the country to look around the site and understand the vision for this project as well as holding discussions with CBC and Westlakes Renaissance. They will be invited back for further interviews on the 1st and 2nd July.

As previously raised English Heritage was invited to inspect the warehouse building and have responded that they do not consider the building worthy of listing, we await the decision on the remaining buildings which is expected in June. Members may have noted that the warehouse building has now actually been substantially demolished, and the risk to the public removed.

Mount Pleasant is the most visible link between the Harbour and the Haig Zone of the Whitehaven Coast. The proposed public realm investment of £433,000 will deliver a high quality accessible area incorporating new lighting, surfacing and arts spaces. It is envisaged that the planning application will be submitted shortly and presented to Full Council in August.

8. CP Housing to meet the needs of the future – Councillor G Clements

At its meetings on the 22nd April and 22nd May the panel has:

- Agreed a draft statutory housing allocations scheme that will be recommended for approval to the Executive on the 30th June
- Satisfied itself that the Home Housing Groups investment plan for achieving the Decent Homes Standard in the borough is achievable with the ongoing support of the Council and its key officers
- Agreed the adoption of a comprehensive set of direct customer housing services
- Revised the strategic Housing Improvement Plan as we approach re-inspection by the Audit Commission in Autumn 2009

In addition service improvements following the adoption of the new Homelessness Strategy and housing options service in 2008 have led to:

- 87 households being prevented from becoming homeless between 1st October 2008 and 31st March 2009

- A further 85 households being helped into accommodation in the same period, mostly in the private sector but some into housing association homes
- A reduction by 33% in the number of households for whom a full homelessness duty was accepted in 2008/09 against 2007/08
- The achievement before 31st December 2008 of the Government target of reducing homelessness temporary accommodation by half by 31st December 2010

Finally performance on Disabled Facilities Grants has improved to the extent that:

- The number of grant approvals in 2008/09 were more than twice those approved in 2007/08
- The waiting time for grant approvals has been reduced by about half

Improving Quality of Life

9. CP Improve the Living Environment – Councillor A Holliday

The Councils Waste Management Team, working in partnership with the Whitehaven in Bloom Group is aiming to tackle the difficult problem of smoking related litter in Whitehaven streets. Over the next few weeks the majority of free standing litter bins in the town Centre will be fitted with stainless steel ashtrays in the top of the bin. The ashtrays are specifically designed for litter bins and when full automatically empty into the bin liner below.

Nationally statistics show that cigarettes account for almost 80% of all litter. In Copeland like elsewhere in the Country the amount of smoking related litter dropped onto our streets has noticeably increased since the introduction of the Smoke Free legislation almost two years ago. An additional problem, which appears to be more prevalent in Whitehaven, is the practice of stubbing out and leaving unsightly cigarette stumps on top of litter bins, a problem it is hoped will be minimised by the fitting of ashtrays.

The Councils enforcement unit is working in partnership with the dogs trust to offer residents of Copeland free neutering vouchers, free dog owners information packs and free chipping of dogs. On the 28th May trained enforcement officers undertook free dog chipping and the handing out of neutering vouchers to residents of Cleator Moor, and will over the next few months provide the

opportunity for two further events, one day in the Millom area and one day in the Woodhouse area.

10. CP Increase opportunities for physical activities – Councillor H Branney

Copeland's sports development officers are taking a lead on the re-shaping of the Cumbria Disability Sports Association. The Association has changed its constitution to reflect the need to work with all under – represented groups rather than just focussing on disability. The Association has been re-branded the Cumbria Sports Equity Alliance and has widened its membership, aims and operation. The intention is to broaden the work done by the Alliance to engage with all under-represented groups, whilst this means retaining a focus upon disabled sports it also means working with hard to reach groups such as women and girls, ethnic minorities and rural communities.

This year's summer sports programme will reflect a shift in emphasis to provide a broader range of activities to engage more young people in sport and physical activity. The programme will include a mobile climbing wall, street football as well as dance and cheerleading. The sports development department is currently developing these activities with youth services and community organisations, delivering even more opportunity for young people in Copeland to get involved.

In a continuation to improve access and interpretation of our woodlands, the Open Spaces department has been working in partnership with The Woodland Trust and the cultural services to raise awareness of the council owned woodlands. As a result pathways and overall access to both Crow Park and Arrowthwaite have been improved with the intention to have signage located within both sites. This will show walks, wildlife to spot and information relating to the flora found within these woodlands. The new signage will be backed up with a proposal to have this information downloadable via podcasts which can be played digitally on mobile phones and iPods. This exciting initiative will enable more people to explore and enjoy some of the fantastic open spaces in Copeland.

The Cultural Services department is planning to hold some community events within Crow Park during the summer with the hope to encourage more people to get out and about within their local woodlands. This will promote a healthy lifestyle and light recreational exercise in a way that all can access. Cultural Services also plan to hold some rambling walks within both Crow Park and Arrowthwaite woodlands in July as part of the Rambling for Life Project, which will be guided through these sites providing the public with information view points and wildlife to look for.