

Executive Report to Full Council – 23 June 2011

Strategic Leadership and Nuclear Portfolio – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership

Government offered local areas the opportunity to take control of their future economic development through the formation of Local Enterprise Partnerships, which are locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses. Local enterprise partnerships are supposed to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. They are also supposedly a key vehicle in delivering Government objectives for economic growth and decentralisation, whilst also providing a means for local authorities to work together with business in order to quicken the economic recovery.

The aim of the LEP is “for Cumbria to have one of the fastest growing economies in the UK in an energised and healthy environment”. The activities of the Cumbria LEP include:

- Championing the economic interests of Cumbria internationally, nationally, regionally and locally
- Driving enterprise, innovation and growth in the Cumbrian economy, delivering real long-term growth in the most efficient and effective ways possible through both our rural and urban based businesses
- Determining the areas of activity and opportunity which will deliver a real return on investment, as well as understanding the key long standing barriers to development
- Stimulating job growth within the private, community and Third Sectors to compensate for job losses currently being experienced in the public sector (both directly and through the impact of spending cuts on public sector contracting) and rebalancing the economy
- Through the partnership, providing the economic and business intelligence, including trend analysis and projections, needed to help inform constructive decision making, sharing this with prospective investors.
- Developing a prospectus of opportunity, as a “living document” setting out current and future opportunities and the support on offer to potential investors, both private and public sector, and promoting those opportunities.
- Within the overall prospectus, setting out our priorities for the Regional Growth Fund and other funding opportunities. We will provide a lead on priorities, and will enable and engage people and organisations in coming forward with innovative solutions to business needs and issues. Where there are gaps we will commission innovative programmes/projects to address those issues.

- Providing a single voice for Cumbria in influencing the development of EU policies which directly impact on Cumbria, and in championing opportunities for Cumbria to maximise the benefits of Europe including access to international markets and to funding
- Working to establish effective networks with other LEPs with similar issues, sharing best practice, addressing joint issues and pooling resources
- Strengthening Cumbria's social fabric through pursuing the Big Society agenda to unlock the energies and resources of our communities in delivering innovative solutions to local issues
- To support the above Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership works to influence the key activities of housing and planning, transport and infrastructure, employment and skills, business and enterprise development, transition to the low carbon economy and support for key sectors

Recently the LEP agreed to support an application for a Cumbria Enterprise Zone, which are areas that will benefit from having simplified planning rules, super-fast broadband and tax breaks for businesses to promote growth. The two sites selected were in Lillyhall and the Barrow Waterfront. The expression of interest titled Fuelling the future is available in the Members Room.

West Cumberland Hospital

Work continues in revising the Full Business Case in line with the recently published clinical strategy to ensure the new hospital facilities can be provided within the available £90 million capital funding. In view of the scale of the revisions a new Planning Application will be required. The current programme is seeking approval of the Full Business Case by NHS North West in July 2011 and then by the Department of Health in September 2011 to enable the start of new build works on site in October 2011. In the meantime funding is in place to continue the programme of decanting and refurbishment on the current site until approval is given to the Full Business Case.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership

The partnership has now moved from receiving information to work intensive assessment which will result in a written report that will be the basis of round 3 public and stakeholder consultation, due to start in September. As colleagues will remember a report will be coming to Full Council early 2012 asking Council to agree / or not to make a formal decision to participate. This will be based on the two year work programme of the partnership, mori polls and most importantly the public/ stakeholder engagement information. The intention is for Copeland to hold a workshop later this year to ensure all CBC members have an opportunity to feed into the formal public and stakeholder consultation.

Nuclear New Build

The focus of Nugen over the next twelve months will be assessing whether or not the site adjacent to Sellafield is right for nuclear new build. As the new build project is dependent on upgrades to the National grid network regular meetings are being held to ensure the planning processes for both projects are compatible. CBC is also preparing a Project Initiation document which will identify the partner resource inputs required to take the project forward. It is envisaged that such resource implications for local authority partners will form the subject of a Planning Performance Agreement with the developer.

Timetable

Dec 2011 – spatial planning, socio –economic and blueprint work completed

2015 – Investment decision by NuGeneration Ltd

2016 – Project start on site

2023 – Site generating power and fully operational

Finance and Resources Portfolio – Councillor Gillian Troughton

Financial Statements and the closing of the 2010/11 accounts

The closedown of the 2010/11 accounts is well underway and is expected to be completed, in accordance with the timetable, for the draft financial statements to be completed by the 30th June 2011. The dates for the audit of the financial statements have been agreed and will commence in June and be completed in September 2011.

In previous years there has been a requirement for the draft financial statements to be approved by the Audit Committee prior to the 30th June each year, but due to a change in the Accounts and Audit Regulations this is no longer a requirement. However, the Audit Committee must still approve the financial statements prior to the 30th September, once they have been audited.

Performance and Transformation Portfolio – Councillor John Bowman

Locality Working Update

All six localities will be working on their existing plans over the next three months to gain a more detailed understanding of their communities' priorities. This work is being undertaken in different ways in different localities. For example, in Whitehaven, two sub groups are working on town centre and youth issues, the top two priorities

identified from available data, to put in place strategies that the partnership can follow to address these. In South Copeland, community led planning work is helping to fill the gaps in Millom and other parishes, likewise in West Copeland. The Lake District National Park Authority is enthusiastic about and actively contributing to locality plan developments in the three localities that have areas within the park. A programme is being put together for key service and theme areas to work with each locality to identify issues and opportunities for improvements and developments to input into locality plans. The localities will each have a developed plan by the end of September, which will inform the next round of plans of County and District Councils, National Park, police and others.

The Locality team is helping partnerships to make progress against the priorities through their action plans and over the next six months will also work with as many partners as possible, including service areas within CBC, to respond to the community priorities. Several partners including police and County Council are adapting their service provision to reflect the locality boundaries, and it is anticipated that the County Council's Neighbourhood Forum areas will also be coterminous with the localities following their current review.

Housing, Planning and Community Safety Portfolio – Councillor George Clements

Local Development Framework (LDF) update

A revised Copeland Local Development Scheme is on today's agenda for Council's consideration. This document sets out the programme of planning policy documents which will make up the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) which is a key means of delivering the Britain's Energy Coast masterplan and the Council's regeneration programme over the next 10-15 years. The Scheme involves a fairly challenging timetable and there will be a need for frequent meetings of the new Members' LDF Working Party to ensure progress is maintained over the next twelve months. Its first meeting has been arranged for late June with the first hour scheduled as a familiarisation session on the LDF open to all interested Members.

The main target for the year is a draft version of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD which is set to go out to consultation during November/December 2011. Work continues on this and the extensive evidence base which supports it. At the same time the planning policy team is preparing other policy documents and one of these is to guide the future development of a Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside. A variety of events and drop-in sessions are being arranged in June and July as part of the community consultation with a number of local schools involved in project initiatives. The timetable will be supplied to all Members once complete.

Housing Investment

At last Full Council, I referred to the acquisition of funding for the development of 63 new affordable homes in Egremont and Millom. These are now under construction and practical completion is expected within a year. We supported further funding bids in May for the Homes & Communities Agency's 2011 to 2015 programme, which is currently in negotiations between the HCA and our housing association partners. I shall have more to report later in the year.

Stock Condition Survey

We are undertaking a private housing sector stock condition survey this year with the final report being expected in the spring of 2012. It will provide us with the most up to date data we need to fulfil our housing responsibilities arising from the Housing Act, 2004, and to cross reference with our localities approach towards sustainable communities. It will also inform our proposed housing strategy.

Landlords Forum

This is essentially for private sector landlords. We held our best attended meeting on 12 May with barely enough chairs in the Bainbridge room. Two presentations were made, including one from the National Landlords Association. There were lively and inclusive discussions about current and future housing markets, particularly in light of government changes to housing benefit and the local housing allowance.

The government plan to release funding next year with which to return empty private sector homes to occupation. Our officers will consider and discuss with stakeholders how best to make use of funding opportunities before bringing a future report to the Strategic Housing Panel.

Choice Based Lettings Scheme

The scheme went live in two phases in April and May this year under the brand name of Cumbria Choice. It is a partnership comprising all 6 local housing authorities in Cumbria plus 8 housing associations, including all of the major providers of affordable rented housing in Cumbria. Regular monitoring reports will be brought to the Strategic Housing Panel to enable Councillors to assess the impact of the scheme on housing needs in Copeland.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Jointly with all 6 Cumbria Districts, the County Council and Public Health we wrote to the Housing Minister in April in favour of higher allocations for disabled facilities in Cumbria. Our performance continues to improve with regard to Disabled Facilities Grants: the average length of time to process and application is now 13 weeks.

Copeland Housing Strategy 2011-2015

In my last report I referred to the findings of our 2010 strategic housing market assessment and needs survey. This provides a substantial evidence base for our proposed housing strategy, which is on the agenda of this meeting.

West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership

The Partnership have employed a Community Safety Officer, hosted by Derwent and Solway Housing, Joanne Thornborrow, who took up post in May 2011. One core task for Joanne will be facilitating the new Locality Multi Agency Problem (LMAP) groups which have core membership from housing and police functions and involve other service providers as relevant to the problem solving. There are four LMAP groups that meet monthly, two for Allerdale and two for Copeland (Whitehaven LMAP and Copeland Rural covering the rest of Copeland Borough). I will bring future updates on this new approach.

Environment and Sustainability Portfolio – Councillor Allan Holliday

Cumbria County Council School Grounds

Members may be aware that our Parks Team were asked at very short notice to start the maintenance of 47 school grounds in May. The schools are spread across the entire County, from Carlisle to Ulverston. The request came about because of a dispute between the County and its former contractor which had led to knee high grass in the schools concerned. Despite this very late start, our parks team responded brilliantly to the challenge. Within 10 days the grass had been cut at all 47 schools. This remarkable achievement was delivered in addition to the team's normal core work ensuring that the Council's own services were not affected.

The future maintenance of the school grounds will be undertaken by the staff who formerly worked on the grounds. These staff have been transferred to the County Council's employment although they will be directly managed by the Parks Management Team under an agreement lasting until 31st March 2012. More work needs to be done, especially in terms of returning the grass to an acceptable condition and ensuring that sports pitch marking is carried out as soon as possible – particularly in time for school sports days.

We are particularly pleased with this initiative, since it demonstrates our County Council colleagues recognise that Copeland's team is capable of delivering the service, at very short notice and at a challenging time in terms of the work backlog and weather.

Schools in Bloom – Mayors Award

Schools across the Copeland Borough are being encouraged to enter into the Mayor's "schools in bloom competition" This competition aims to recognise the environmental work of individual schools, particularly where children have been

involved in the development and maintenance of the school grounds. The schools are being judged on a number of criteria including recycling initiatives, cleanliness of the school grounds, environmental projects including education and learning.

Judging will take place from the 6th July and expected to take 3 days. The top three schools will be invited to meet the Mayor and to receive their awards. These three schools will then be put forward to represent Copeland in the Cumbria Schools in Bloom Competition.

Refuse Service Changes

The latest phase in the ongoing programme to standardise refuse collections for all of Copeland's householders was implemented in the largely terraced areas of Millom and Haverigg in early June. Around 2000 households will have seen some change. For around 1200 of these customers will have moved from black sack collections to wheeled bin. The remaining households move onto the blue sack service that has proven successful in other areas of the Borough in encouraging increased recycling and reducing waste to landfill.

Information packs were distributed to all affected households in mid May detailing how the changes affected collections as well as details on what assistance can be provided to those who may need it. Following this a number of drop-in sessions were held to enable those affected to discuss any individual issues in person with officers from our Waste Services team. These sessions were well received and between 40 and 50 people took the opportunity to attend. Consequently a number of assisted collections have been agreed, larger bins (where appropriate) delivered and household specific queries resolved well ahead of the start of the new service.

The delivery of bins, which was carried out by our own staff, was overseen by one of the Waste Supervisors who was able to deal with immediate questions such as where should the bins be left for collection on site. All bins were delivered within the anticipated timescale.

A number of black boxes and box hats were collected at the drop-in sessions and it is anticipated that the revised collection arrangements will encourage more residents to use the kerbside collection service.

Carbon Management Plan

Last year the Council was accepted onto the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme run by the Carbon Trust with the aim of helping the Council to reduce its carbon footprint. The carbon footprint is made up of energy and fuel consumption associated with the Council's operations. A five year Council Carbon Management Plan is now in place which sets a target of reducing the Council's carbon footprint by 25% by 2015. A number of projects have already been completed and identified that will deliver carbon savings. Projects and carbon savings will be reviewed annually and report quarterly to an internal Carbon Management Board.

Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio – Councillor Phil Greateorex

Support to new business starts

The Borough Council is continuing to support the Intensive Business Start Up Support programme for the year 2011/2012 with funding of £20,000 from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Under this programme, those interested in starting a new business can receive free business start up advice and training. The programme is managed by Cumbria County Council in partnership with officers of the Borough Council and is delivered by the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce. A recent development is that those that engage with the programme can apply for a business start up grant of £500 funded through the West Cumbria Development Fund and administered by West Cumbria Development Agency. For the year 2011/2012 the contract is for the programme to create 68 new business starts and 9 new social enterprises. The Borough Council is also supporting the Ways into Successful Enterprise programme with a contribution of £55,000 also from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. This works in the community, helping people who are interested in exploring self employment but lack the confidence and skills to move forward. This programme provides the support required and leads people on to programmes such as the Intensive Business Support programme. Both these programmes contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the Copeland Regeneration Plan concerned with enabling a prosperous mixed economy, facilitating vibrant communities and providing sustainable opportunities for all. The projects are included in the Corporate Implementation Plan, with the target of creating 50 new businesses of which 20 to be located in the most disadvantaged super output areas.

Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative

The Copeland Apprenticeship Initiative, financed by the Council and Copeland Community Fund, commenced in March 2011 and provides apprenticeship training opportunities for local residents with Copeland employers. The Programme is open to unemployed individuals aged 16 and over. The scheme will be delivered by the Copeland Work and Skills Partnership and led by Copeland Borough Council. 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 is a 3 year programme with the first apprenticeships commencing in May 2011.

Following the first Recruitment event that took place on the 14th April, the following employers have appointed apprentices: Bleasdale Solicitors (Business Administration), Whitehaven Community Trust (Catering), Westlakes Engineering Ltd (Business Administration), North Country Leisure (Customer Service), Lydgate Trading Post (Hospitality), Howgill Family Centre (Business Administration), and Rosehill House (Health & Social Care). The target number of apprentices for Round 1 is 10

It is anticipated that there will be an enhanced response from Employers during Round 2 of the initiative. Information about the scheme has been forwarded to various employer networks over the last few weeks including: Cumbria Chamber of Commerce; Business Link; Invest in Cumbria; West Cumbria Business Cluster; West Cumbria Development Agency (publicity on their website), Sellafield Supply Chain Forum; Federation of Small Businesses. The date for the next Recruitment event is 12 July 2011. The target number of apprentices for Round 2 is 15. This project contributes to the delivery of the objectives of the Copeland Regeneration Framework concerned with providing sustainable opportunities for all and enabling a vibrant economy. The project is included in the Corporate Implementation Plan with a target of 30 apprenticeships commenced during 2011 / 2012.

Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster

The Council has become a member of Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster in line with our business engagement activities. The Cluster regularly attracts around 50 businesses to monthly meetings.

Copeland Low Carbon Business Grant

Using our LABGI funding and to meet the objective to support and encourage growth in the low carbon economy, as outlined in Copeland's Regeneration Framework 2009-12, the Council is offering a grant to help small local businesses (SMEs) in the borough who are interested in improving their energy efficiency or adopting renewable energy systems.

The grant is linked to Cumbria Business Environment Network's Resource Efficiency Audit and will be used towards the costs of measures identified in the environmental audit. The total budget is £25k, which can help a minimum of five businesses, and the grant is available for 50% of project costs up to a maximum of £4,000.

Leisure Culture and Youth Portfolio – Councillor Hugh Branney

The Beacon

After a year in planning, visitors to The Beacon from Saturday 11 June will experience the biggest exhibition to ever come to Whitehaven. Creatures from the BBC Walking with Dinosaurs exhibition have invaded all floors at The Beacon. The Harbour Gallery has been transformed into a Jurassic jungle with all the sights, sounds and smells of a land before time.

The exhibition will be officially opened by TV Vet, Steve Leonard.

The show will run for the whole summer until 4 September and during that time The Beacon will not be closed on Mondays and will open until 5.30pm each day.

Admission applies to everyone with the introduction of a charge for children at £1.50. Children's "Activity Pass" is also available at £5 permitting admission, a craft session and a free dinosaur toy.

Exhibition sponsors include Fluid Productions, Yarl Hydracentre, Sealey, and Northern Rail.

Publicity includes CFM radio advertising, Northern Rail promotions leaflets and publicity stunts, specific Dinosaur leaflet and distribution across North West via Aha Marketing, 20,000 leaflets to school children via "Bags for Summer" distributed by NPD Marketing, giant banners suspended from The Beacon itself, harbourside dinosaur footprints, Facebook and website updates and bus advertising along "streetliners".

Copeland youth forums progressing well:

Youth Forums in Copeland are progressing well allowing young people in each locality to have a voice on issues that affect them, and to become actively involved in local decision-making. In order for these to be successful our Youth Engagement Officer (Emma Dickinson) has been working closely with Children's services and Brathay Hall (who currently hold the participation youth contract in Cumbria), as well as all other youth providers in Copeland who have come together to form an adult advisory group to assist with the coordination of the forums and to ensure as many young people as possible are included. A speak up page has also been created for Copeland to enable young people from different forums to keep in touch and up to date with what each forum is working on.

Meetings to date:

- The Whitehaven Youth Forum has met 3 times and a total of 21 young people have been involved in the process, the next meeting will take place Monday 27th June. In this area young people's issues include retail and recreational facilities, communication about youth opportunities and job opportunities, these priorities have been linked to the Whitehaven locality Partnership.
- The North East Copeland Youth Forum has met 2 times and a total of 10 young people have been involved in the process, the next meeting will take place Monday 20th June. In this area young people's issues include transport, the profile of Young People in the area and food outlets. The forum is linked to Cleator Moor town council and at the next meeting we will be working on bringing young people together from Cleator Moor and Frizington.
- The Mid Copeland Youth Forum has met 2 times and a total of 11 young people have been involved in the process, the forum was launched in the together we can week, Parish, Borough and County councillors are engaging with the forum and links are being established with the Parish council as the members of the group feel generational gaps in the area are a problem, other

issues for young people include transport and homelessness. The next meeting will take place Monday 13th June.

- The Howgate and Distington's Youth Forum will meet for the first Wednesday 22nd June, in addition to this 8 young people from this area are working with Brathay on the demoxchange, 3 sessions have taken place so far with another 4 sessions planned throughout June.
- The South Copeland Youth forum has been operating as a school group and a total of 18 young people have been involved in the process. The group has been working on getting a recycling scheme in the school and recently presented their ideas to the head teacher who has agreed to trial their ideas.
- The West Copeland Forum has not met yet but is working with Egremont youth works and young Cumbria to engage young people in this area to establish an appropriate time and location.

These forums have also enabled Copeland to have representation at the **Cumbria Youth Council** for the first time. 10 young people attended the event at Brathay Hall on Wednesday 1st June. This was a chance for young people from all over Cumbria to come together and talk about the future of the Cumbria Youth Council and how it will work in the future as well as speakers from UK Youth Parliament and the British Youth Council.

Whitehaven Carnival

Following last year's success of first place in the Carnival, Sports Development has once again entered a float into Whitehaven Carnival on 2nd July 2011.

This year's theme is around the Rugby Union World cup which is taking place this year in New Zealand. Sports Development have been working with the Youth Section at Egremont RUFC who have designed the float & work is now underway to decorate it. The youth section has also come up with their own 'Copeland Haka' to showcase at the carnival. The Sports Development Team is also working with the Rugby Clubs in Copeland to promote their 'Choose Rugby' launch throughout the summer.

Copeland Open Weekend

On the 23rd July to mark one year to go until the 2012 Olympic Games, Copeland is hosting an Open Weekend. It will be a mass participation event involving as many clubs & sports as possible to showcase to Copeland Residents what sports and activities are on offer in their Borough. Residents will get to have a go at different sports & take away information about clubs & activities. The main event will be in Castle Park with other activities going on throughout the Borough.

Copeland Children's Abled and Disabled Sports Festival (CADS)

The Council delivered a Children's Abled and Disabled Sports Festival at Whitehaven Sports Centre over the Easter break. CADS attracted 57 children with varying levels of ability. Across the 3 continuous days the young participants enjoyed 18 sports including rock climbing, squash, netball, dodgeball and rugby. The main aim of the CADS festival is to build confidence and raise the self-esteem of the participants, as well as providing a fully inclusive environment for young people to enjoy physical activity, without the mockery or peer pressure that can be associated with school sport. The festival invites all siblings to participate. As in previous years we hired local club coaches to provide the sessions therefore establishing a sense of familiarity for the children.

Destination: Sport - Copeland Summer Holiday programme

Our summer holiday sports programme has been re-branded 'Destination: Sport'. Around 25 sessions will be delivered each week during the summer school holidays across the whole borough. The sessions are held in a range of local venues including village halls and community playing fields. The Council delivers this programme in partnership with North Country Leisure. This year the programme will offer four different elements:

Multi Sports: - The 1-hour multi sports sessions will be delivered across the borough and will be made up of a variety of sports including Dodgeball, Athletics, Soccer, Kwik Cricket etc.

JuniGym: - These 45 minute sessions will provide fun, energetic circuit training to u-13s. These will be delivered in towns/village halls as well as Leisure centres, particularly located in areas of health inequality. This will be a follow up to our hugely popular curriculum time Gym Kids project, which promotes healthy living and active lifestyles in primary schools.

Netball Academy: - To further promote competitive sport for girls we will be holding Netball Academies in Millom and Whitehaven, with a view to establishing teams in those areas.

Fencing: - We will be targeting semi-sporty children across the borough who do not normally participate in competitive team sport. 50-minute fencing sessions will be delivered in 5 localities across Copeland within existing partners' community facilities.

Destination: Sport will be delivered with half the budget available last year ie £4,500. However, with our revised delivery approach we anticipate 1,500 Copeland children will benefit, a 50% improvement on our additional cost per place from last year.

Copeland Coastal Initiative

The Copeland Coastal Initiative is a five year regeneration programme designed to enhance and celebrate Copeland's coast in doing so exploit the economic development and environmental opportunities of the coast.

The four beaches at Seascale, Haverigg, St Bees and Silecroft have retained their Quality Coast Awards for 2011. These are the only beaches on the Cumbrian coast to have achieved this status.

The Copeland Coastal Initiative is underpinned by a Coastal Partnership which brings together a wide range of stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and local communities. It is through this partnership that many of the objectives of the initiative will be delivered and sustained in the long term. The Partnership will have its formal launch at Ravenglass on the 30th June 2011.

Consultants, Gillespies, have been commissioned to produce a design guide for the public realm along the coast and to carry out a signage audit at the four Quality Coast Beaches in close liaison with the Beach Advisory Groups.

The Coastal Partnership Board has been enhanced by the addition of Locality representatives drawn from each locality with a section of coast. This will align the objectives and resources of the Coastal Initiative with locality plans.

A programme of tourism activity is under development involving a series of exciting events along the length of the coast throughout 2012. This will be delivered in partnership with west Cumbria Tourism Partnership.

Partnerships and Policy Portfolio – Councillor Karl Connor

Second Copeland Partnership Conference in June

On 29th June 2011, the second Copeland Partnership Conference will be held at Drigg and Carleton Village Hall. Following the success of the first conference in December 2010, this conference will give residents and partners from all sectors the opportunity to agree a Sustainable Communities Strategy for Copeland drawing on the West Cumbria Future Generation and Communities that Work strategies and plan. The conference will enable discussion and agreement on key shared priorities for the partnership for 2011/12.

Communications Strategy and Branding



Proud of our past. Energised for our future.

As an integral part of our new Council Plan, we are now in the latter stages of development of our refreshed communications strategy. This strategy succinctly outlines our new approach to communications, which has developed over the last year, and builds on the work we have done as part of the Choosing to Change programme. The strategy will highlight our communications aims, which are to:

- Raise awareness of the services of Copeland Council and how to access these
- Ensure we have a consistent approach to communications that positions the council as open, honest, efficient and offering value-for-money
- Raise the profile and reputation of Copeland

The strategy will be accompanied by a set of communications standards, which are our protocols and processes for communications - how we do things. The aim of these standards is to improve the consistency and standard of all our communications work, right across the organisation. There will also be a delivery plan which highlights how the aims of the strategy will be delivered to improve our communications.

At the same time, we have also been working to improve our image and branding, after recognising that our current brand needs to be modernised. We have refreshed the brand to create a new image, and a strapline that sets out how we want to present the council as a modern, progressive organisation. The new image and branding suite will be launched in the next few weeks, and from that point, we will be using a new set of templates for the majority of our documents.

If you would like any information on any of the above, please contact Ian Curwen, Communications Manager, on 01946 598504.