



# Copeland Borough Council

**A consultation on:**

***Our proposed budget savings 2013-2015***

***The future role of the Council***

October 2012

## Foreword

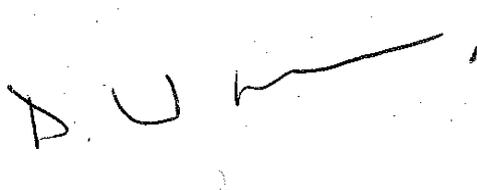
**We are facing significant cuts in funding from Central Government and we cannot continue to provide the services that we currently do.**

**We are therefore proposing to focus on the provision of statutory (must-do) services to our residents and businesses.**

**This consultation document outlines our proposed cuts to save the £2.6m and we need your feedback to inform our decisions.**



**Cllr. Elaine Woodburn, Leader of the Council**



**Cllr. David Moore, Leader of the Opposition**

If you have any questions regarding this consultation please contact Ian Curwen on 01946 598504.

Alternatively, you can email [communications@copeland.gov.uk](mailto:communications@copeland.gov.uk).

## Introduction

**You'll know from watching television, listening to the radio or from reading newspapers that the economy is struggling and that public finances are being cut.**

The reasons are many and varied, but the knock-on effect is that local authorities have been given large cuts to funding from the government.

Copeland was one of the hardest hit councils, with almost a third of our funding cut over the four years from 2011 to 2015. On top of this, there remain some unknowns in terms of our future funding. We expect to hear about future funding in December and if we are required to make further savings we will develop our proposals and tell you about these as soon as we can.

We have already made some big cuts over the last two years to reduce our operating costs, for example by reducing our management. So far the cuts we have made have only had a minimal impact on the services we provide. However, due to these huge and unprecedented cuts in funding, we now have to save at least a further **£2.6m** over the next two years.

These cuts mean that we will have to change the way we operate, prioritise and even stop providing some of our services. The impact of these cuts will be immediate and felt widely across the borough.

Some of the government's policy changes also impact on our finances. We have tried to factor these changes into our savings estimates and into planning our future role.

There are some statutory services that we must provide, legally. We, in line with many other local councils, have also provided a number of discretionary services – services that we are not obliged to provide legally. We are now no longer given funding to provide these services for you.

We must now focus on cutting the costs of these discretionary services drastically. This will mean that most of these discretionary services will reduce or stop in the immediate future.

## Having your say

This document outlines our proposed response to the cuts and because we have to change what we do, our new focus.

There is no one right answer as to how we should do this, but the proposals in this document are designed to meet the cuts in our funding and allow us to set a balanced budget in the years ahead which we are required to do by law.

We are seeking your views on these proposals.

We are also consulting with a wide range of partner organisations and representative bodies.

We have also designed a questionnaire for you to complete to record your views. Please take your time to read the proposals then complete the questionnaire online by visiting our website, [www.copeland.gov.uk/future](http://www.copeland.gov.uk/future). You can also request a copy if you prefer.

We will also be holding meetings where you can find out more and have your say. Details will be available on our website and in the local press.

**This consultation closes on Friday 7 December 2012.**

## Committed to Copeland

We recognise that having less funding means that we will provide less services, and that some services will be provided in different ways or by different people.

It also means that we have looked at the future role of the council, so we are focussed on meeting the borough's needs – both now and in the future.

As part of this work, we have identified three top priorities that we will work to deliver. These reflect the needs of Copeland and our ability to deliver or influence these. They are important as they reflect the role we can play in improving Copeland.

### Our proposed priorities

#### **Deliver efficient and effective statutory services**

*We provide a range of statutory services including; planning, building control, running elections, providing homelessness advice services, waste and recycling services and carrying out food safety inspections and enforcing environmental legislation. We propose to continue to provide these services to meet Copeland's needs. We will ensure that they are delivered as cost effectively as possible*

#### **Alongside others, make our contribution to Copeland as a place that people are proud of**

*We provide a range of services that contribute to the way Copeland looks as a place. This includes; maintaining some of our open spaces and parks, providing street furniture like benches and helping to support the provision of sport pitches and play areas. We will continue to provide some of these but at a reduced level.*

#### **Be an effective public service partner so we can get the best deal for Copeland**

*We work with a range of agencies and partners to ensure that the needs of Copeland are understood and represented. This helps to influence decisions and the way services are delivered. It is an important part of our community leadership role. Looking forward, we propose to continue to represent Copeland and our communities in line with our corporate priorities.*

In the future, our role will be different, but there is much that we do to improve the borough that will continue.

## **We will develop our important services**

Our work to protect public safety and the most vulnerable, including waste, food, resilience and building control will continue to be prioritised.

We will continue to administrate housing and council tax benefit for residents across Copeland who need it and we will still collect Council Tax on behalf of Cumbria County Council, the Police, Fire Service and Parish and Town Councils through our Revenues and Benefits shared service. We will also still collect Non Domestic Rates on behalf of the Government.

## **We are planning for growth**

There are numerous opportunities for the development of the borough and we'll be working to make sure these take place. These include:

- Opportunities to benefit from nuclear developments
- Ensuring Copeland benefits from social and economic developments from Britain's Energy Coast, which is leading the area's economic transformation
- Hosting and supporting the work of the Copeland Community Fund, which is providing much needed advice and funding to community led projects in the borough
- Securing and delivering new community benefits and funding opportunities
- Continuing to seek external funding for future opportunities in Copeland

## **Current projects**

Exciting projects like Albion Square, which will be completed by mid-2014; the £4m development of the Rosehill Theatre; the expansion of the Marina at Whitehaven Harbour; major funding bids to the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund are all moving forward for the benefit of the borough and its residents and businesses.

## **People and communities**

We will continue to support the needs of our people and communities. This includes the work we do to prevent homelessness and to provide food, warmth and shelter for the increasing number in the borough who have become homeless.

## **Working with partners**

We will work with partners – both public and private – to collectively do more and help deliver more for the people of the borough.

## Delivering important services

As well as looking at priorities, we have looked at the services we currently provide.

We currently provide services that fit into three broad categories:

- Discretionary services – those we choose to provide
- Statutory services – those we must provide by law
- Internal services – the things we need to do to run the council and comply with the law

The size of the savings needed mean we need to look at how we operate our **discretionary** services, a large area of spend for us and whether we continue to provide some of these.

We propose to reduce the net budget of these services by **56%** (net) over the next two years. This is where the majority of our savings proposals are focussed.

We recognise that because we are obliged to provide our **statutory** services, we must ensure that these are adequately funded in future.

We have already made significant improvements to the efficiency of these services and we will continue to look for opportunities to improve this more in future.

Due to the importance of these services, we propose to only reduce the net budget of these services by a further **2%** (net) in the next two years.

Our **internal services**, which include management and services like HR, IT, legal and payroll, will also see their net budget reduced as we change these services to reflect the size and scope of the council in future.

We propose to reduce the net budget of these services by **22%** (net) over the next two years.

## Some things to remember

We are facing a real-terms reduction in budget by central government, and increasing demand for our services.

We receive only 12% of Council Tax collected. This equates to around 35p day for the services we provide. The majority of Council Tax funding goes to Cumbria County Council, with some going to Cumbria Police and your parish/town council.

We froze Council Tax levels for the last two years and like all local authorities have not given our employees pay rises for a number of years. Members' basic allowances have also not been increased for a number of years.

We're not legally able to reduce the number of councillors in Copeland. The Boundary Commission have told us they couldn't look at this issue until 2015 with implementation of any recommendations not happening until 2019.

We need to save £2.6m over the next two years. The proposals in this document meet this target.

These are the options that the council could take. Final decisions won't be made until February 2013.

Your views are crucial to us. Please let us know what you think about the cuts we are proposing. Your views will help shape decisions.

After we've made these savings, we will still have money to spend on our services. And we'll continue to provide cost effective services to the people of Copeland.

Whilst we will no longer be providing some services, they may still be provided if community organisations or town or parish councils choose to operate them instead of us.

Further information can be found at [www.copeland.gov.uk/future](http://www.copeland.gov.uk/future).

## **Our vision and priorities**

Our vision is:

**“Working to improve lives, communities and the prosperity of Copeland”**

We would like to keep this as our ambition but also have a clear focus for how we will operate the business. We think that our new mission summarises this:

**“A small and flexible council that works with partners to arrange essential services for residents in Copeland”**

This new mission reflects that we will be much smaller than we are now. But it also reflects the growing importance of working with other partners to deliver services and achieve our ambitions for the borough.

In the future we might not provide services in the way we do now, but might work with others such as other public sector bodies or the community and voluntary sector to arrange and deliver services.

**Our mission also highlights the need to be flexible in the future, and increasing the efficiency of the services we do provide, wherever possible, will help ensure this is the case.**

## Budget proposals for 2013-15

As we have outlined earlier in this document, the proposals in this document represent large cuts to the services that we currently provide. The decisions we will take at the end of this consultation will be difficult, and the choices we make will have an impact on residents across the borough.

The table below summarises the cuts and service changes we are proposing to make. If we implement all of these changes, we will reduce our budget by **£2.6m** by April 2015.

Service Types	Proposed Savings	Net Budget	% of Net Budget
Discretionary	£1.969m	£3.575m	55%
Statutory (Must do)	£157,000	£5.194m	3%
Council Running Costs	£480,000	£2.189m	22%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£2.606m</b>	<b>£10.958m</b>	<b>24%</b>

## **Proposals for discretionary services**

### **Proposal:**

To significantly reduce the cost of our discretionary services, by reducing provision, stopping services or seeking partners to operate some services.

### **Saving:**

£1,969,000 from the budget of £3,575,000 – over two years.

### **What this means:**

As previously outlined, the bulk of our savings will come from discretionary services, as we have a choice whether to provide these or not.

The reductions in funding we have seen mean that we have little choice but to make cuts in this area.

We currently subsidise some of our discretionary services, like car parks and the crematorium. In the future this will not be the case.

Where we will no longer provide a service, we hope to work with partners and the community to see if they will provide it. Just because we don't provide a service, it doesn't mean it has to stop.

This approach will include seeking commercial partners or Community Asset Transfer. You can read more about our Community Asset Transfer proposals in the appendix to this document.

## Discretionary services - summary of proposed savings

		Proposed Saving (£K)
<b>DISCRETIONARY SERVICES</b>		<b>£1.969m</b>
1	Reduce the Civic and Mayoral budget	27
2	Stop some corporate subscriptions	10
3	Stop producing printed copies of Copeland Matters	16
4	Reduce the civic hospitality budget	9
5	Review the grants we provide to third party organisations, in accordance with our new role	82
6	Reduce the cost of the Copeland Centre	150
7	Increase car parking charges	59
8	Increase Crematorium fees	60
9	Increase fees for the management of play areas and teen spaces	4
10	Stop providing CCTV	50
11	Stop kerbside plastic and cardboard recycling	54
12	Charge for additional or replacement bins	15
13	Charge for green waste collections	31
14	Stop the winter collection of garden waste	40
15	Reduce allotment maintenance to essential only	2
16	Reduce the standard of sports pitch maintenance	14
17	Reduce grass cutting across the borough	86
18	Stop floral displays & maintenance across the borough	96
19	Stop direct funding for Christmas lights	23
20	Stop the provision shrub beds	14
21	Close public toilets and review provision of grants for public toilets	41
22	Stop the discretionary concessionary travel scheme	30
23	Review providing joint funding for Neighbourhood Forum grants in Copeland	14
24	Restructure our economic development, localities and communities functions	165
25	Stop our sustainability function	40
26	Close Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre and review the provision of grants for other Tourist Information Centres	61
27	Reduce the cost of operating the Beacon by operating with a partner, or closing if a partner can't be found	325
28	Stop Health & sports development work	113
29	Reduce the cost of operating our sports facilities by transferring Whitehaven Civic Hall and Cleator Moor Bowls Centre to a partner to operate without subsidy and reduce the subsidy for Whitehaven Sports Centre and Copeland Pool	338

**You can read more about these proposals in the next few pages.**

## **Beacon, tourism and arts**

We currently directly provide and support a range of cultural and tourism services throughout Copeland. This includes: the Beacon – our museum and arts gallery, our tourist information centre in Whitehaven, arts development service and grants to other organisations in Copeland.

We propose to reduce our funding to these facilities and services.

We will actively seek alternatives where this is possible. Where it is not, services and facilities will have to close.

In reviewing this area we have also sought to recognise the role other partners have in providing these services and facilities.

### **The Beacon**

#### **Proposal:**

To reduce the cost of operating the Beacon, by:

- Reduce opening hours by April 2013
- Stop funding educational and cultural events
- Stop funding exhibitions and only offer these if they are self-financing
- Reduce the advice support the Beacon gives to other museums in Copeland and replace with third party free support
- Close the Beacon entirely to the public by April 2014 unless a partner is found to work with us to develop and run the facility

#### **Saving:**

£104,000 in 2013/14 by the first four options above

£325,000 after April 2014.

#### **What this means:**

The Beacon is Copeland's museum and art gallery. The museum has its own identity, but is operated by us at a cost of £450,000 per year.

The Beacon provides a range of facilities including museum exhibitions and activities and events, which are used by schools, residents and visitors. It also hosts a number of local interest groups and clubs. We also have a museum collection and a curator to manage this.

Our proposals centre around changing the way the Beacon operates so that it is not reliant on our funding. This means that if the museum is to continue to operate it will need to be funded by a partner. It also means that many educational and cultural events will only take place if funding from other sources can be found.

We will explore whether the Beacon can be run commercially or in partnership with other providers but it is likely that this will result in changes to opening hours, the museum collection and the level of activity taking place at the Beacon.

## **Tourism and tourist information centres**

### **Proposal:**

To close Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre and review provision of grant funding to other Tourist Information Centres.

### **Saving:**

£61,000 per year from April 2013 onwards

### **What this means:**

We provide many services that support tourism in Copeland, including running Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre and being an active member of the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership. We also provide some grants to other organisations.

However, we no longer believe we can provide these in the same way and we propose to close the Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre by April 2013.

We will also review the grants we provide to others in this area and we will seek to maintain our role within the Partnership if this can be funded a different way.

## **Arts**

### **Proposal:**

We will no longer provide an arts development service directly. We will review the provision of grants in this area.

### **Saving:**

It is anticipated that a saving of £18,000 per year will be made.

### **What this means:**

We offer arts development advice and support to a range of community venues and amateur and professional groups in Copeland by employing a part-time Arts Development Officer. We also provide grants to some organisations that are also involved in arts provision throughout Copeland.

Our changing priorities and the limits on our funding mean we will no longer be able to do this and will review the provision of grants to arts work.

We provide only a small part of the arts offer in the borough. We would expect other activity to continue, led by our other partners.

## **Sports and leisure**

We own sports and leisure facilities, which are operated on our behalf by North Country Leisure. We also have a sports and health team who work with communities to provide sports and health activities and to support projects.

### **Sports and leisure facilities**

#### **Proposal:**

Reduce the subsidy we provide to sports and leisure facilities by:

- Close Whitehaven Civic Hall by November 2013, unless a partner can be found to operate it without a subsidy. It will be operated on a caretaker-only basis from April 2013.
- Close Cleator Moor Bowls and Sports Centre by April 2013 unless a partner can be found to operate it without a subsidy (which may include by Community Asset Transfer)
- Reduce our subsidy to Copeland Pool
- Reduce our subsidy to Whitehaven Sports Centre

#### **Saving:**

£338,000 per year from April 2014 onwards

#### **What this means:**

Our four sports and leisure facilities are operated by North Country Leisure.

These are:

- Copeland Pool
- Whitehaven Sports Centre
- Whitehaven Civic Hall
- Cleator Moor Bowls and Sports Centre

The breakdown of costs and users for these facilities is shown below:

Facility	Cost (£k)	Users
Copeland Pool	200	190,612
Whitehaven Sports Centre	92	214,444
Whitehaven Civic Hall	195	61,822
Cleator Moor Bowls and Sports Centre	56	29,656

Whitehaven Civic Hall and Cleator Moor Bowls and Sports Centre rely on subsidies that we can no longer afford.

The Civic Hall will no longer be a public facility unless an operator can be found to run it without council funding.

We will work with communities to seek an alternative provider for the Cleator Moor Bowls Centre.

There would be a review of open times, fees and the programme at Copeland Swimming Pool and Whitehaven Sports Centre.

However, we will seek to protect and develop the “Beactive Plus Card” which enables some residents, such as those on low incomes, to access sports and activities at a reduced rate.

## **Sports and health development**

### **Proposal:**

To cease the provision of our sports and health development work and community support. To review the provision of associated grants.

### **Saving:**

£113,000 per year from April 2013

**What this means:**

Our sports and health development staff work with local schools and community groups.

We also offer grants to a small number of community run facilities and deliver an annual programme of sports and physical activities.

It is proposed that this activity would cease.

Free school holiday sports and activity programmes for children will no longer be organised or funded by ourselves.

These may continue but will require another provider to take the lead and other funding resources to be found to fund Copeland Clubs, sports coaches and facilities to run the programmes.

Our sports staff currently organise able and disabled sports activity for 5 to 19 year olds attend holiday sports activities together. Another organisation will need to take on this activity to keep it running in Copeland.

It is hoped that the sports clubs in the borough will continue to work together without free sports development support from the council and there are some resources at Cumbria and national sports body level to help clubs.

## **Economic development, localities and communities**

Working with partners, we carry out a number of economic and community development roles.

A lot of this work has, in the past, included working with others to attract external funding into the borough and delivering physical and social projects with communities through our locality workers, businesses and partners.

Our proposal is to reduce the size and scope of this service significantly and operate with a newly focussed team.

We will retain a reduced team reflecting our proposed priorities and seek to ensure it complements the work of our partners.

### **Proposal:**

We propose to:

- Reduce the size of the team
- Reduce the scope of the service but maintain a commitment to both locality support and a small core of strategic regeneration activity.
- Stop directly delivering work and skills projects like Copeland Apprentice Initiative and get partners to deliver without the council's input
- Stop funding and reduce our activity on business engagement and expect other bodies to deliver this more than at present. We will stay active in enabling socio economic benefits from companies and supply chain activity within the borough as resources allow.
- Reduce our capacity to help groups and regeneration projects develop and bid for funding. We will continue to work with high priority regeneration initiatives.
- We will continue to work with our key regeneration partnerships: Britain's Energy Coast, Cumbria LEP, Locality Partnerships, Copeland Skills and Work Partnership.
- To cease providing youth engagement support, unless external funding can be found.

**Saving:**

£165,000 per year from April 2013.

**Impact:**

We will work much more through our existing partnerships to make sure that the needs of Copeland are understood and met, particularly in the area of economic development.

Our new, smaller team will work with partners and communities to progress priority development projects.

As there will be reduced capacity, we will no longer support all the projects and initiatives we have done in the past.

**Sustainability****Proposal:**

Cease our sustainability function and stop delivering specialist sustainability activity, other than to reduce our own carbon footprint and provide the Affordable Warmth project.

**Saving:**

£40,000 per year from April 2013.

**What this means:**

We currently work with a number of other partners, agencies and households in Copeland to reduce the impact of climate change and our carbon footprint.

We also coordinate and deliver a climate change plan for Copeland as well as our own carbon management plan.

We will find alternative ways to continue our own carbon management plan to reduce carbon use and costs in our buildings and working practices, especially where there is a financial saving that can be made.

We will continue with our commitment to the Affordable Warmth Project recognising the vital role this plays in meeting need within our communities.

We propose to seek external funding to support the Youth Engagement role and maintain the current level of service.

## **Discretionary Concessionary Travel scheme**

### **Proposal:**

To cease providing the discretionary Concessionary Travel scheme of vouchers for transport in Copeland

### **Saving:**

£30,000 per year from April 2013.

### **What this means:**

We currently provide a discretionary Concessionary Travel scheme offering travel vouchers worth £28 to eligible pensioners and disabled residents. We reviewed the scheme and changed the eligibility criteria last year.

We are one of few councils in the country to still provide a discretionary Concessionary Travel Scheme. We are the only Cumbrian council to still offer this service.

We know that the scheme is popular and the proposals would mean that a number of eligible residents would no longer be able to apply for and receive this benefit.

However, the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (bus pass), remains available. We are also working with the County Council to improve community transport initiatives across Copeland.

## **Parks and open spaces**

We provide a range of services to help improve the environment in Copeland, include the work our grounds team do and through the provision different services and community assets.

### **Grounds maintenance**

#### **Proposal:**

We propose to:

- Reduce the frequency at which we cut grass to once per year with pathways and perimeters cut more often in summer.
- Reduce the frequency of all other verges and greens to two cuts per year
- Remove three quarters of shrub beds and re-seed them with grass.
- Remove annual flower/plant bedding and re-seed with grass
- Stop providing flower tubs, hanging baskets and floral displays across Copeland.
- Put in place a management fee for new play area developments to cover our management, maintenance and inspection costs
- Increase the hourly rate which we currently charge for managing, maintaining and inspecting play areas on behalf of partners and others
- Reduce allotment maintenance costs by carrying out essential maintenance only
- Reduce the standard of the council's sports pitch provision by reducing maintenance to grass cutting and goal post provision only with any rental charges currently in place ending.

#### **Saving:**

£216,000 per annum from April 2013

#### **What this means:**

Our Open Spaces team provide services across Copeland, from parks and play areas to environmental enforcement and allotments. We also provide grants to other organisations.

The proposals would reduce the costs of maintenance, including equipment.

The proposals would lead to a reduced service and we know that they would therefore have an environmental and visual impact all over Copeland.

We also know that open spaces are used by residents and other community groups for social, leisure and play purposes and the proposals would have a wide impact.

Where we can, we will look for alternatives, for example, working with community groups and organisations.

## **Street furniture and lights**

We provide different street furniture and street lighting in Copeland.

### **Proposal:**

We propose to:

- Seek alternative arrangements for the provision of **Christmas lights** in Whitehaven and Cleator Moor by 2015 by seeking to transfer to this service and stop providing it after that if alternative arrangements cannot be found
- Reduce the budget we allocate to **street furniture** and remove assets as they reach the end of their life rather than repair or replace them at our cost
- Stop funding **CCTV** in Whitehaven, Egremont, Cleator Moor, Frizington, Millom and St Bees in line with current Police practice

### **Saving:**

£73,000 per year from April 2013

### **What this means:**

Street scene covers a range of environmental services including physical assets like street furniture. These cover, for example, seating, bollards, gazebos, railings and gates. We also provide grants to other organisations.

Under the proposals, Christmas Lights would only continue to be provided if a partner or community group funded these.

We think our street furniture budget reductions will have an impact across the borough, with items not replaced once they reach the end of their useful life.

CCTV would no longer be in operation, but in many areas of the country, including Cumbria, this is no longer a primary means of securing photographic evidence of crimes. The Police do not wish to take on the running of these facilities.

We would work to transfer these services to alternative providers, so they stay open, but this cannot be guaranteed.

## **Public toilets**

### **Proposal:**

We propose to close our public toilets in Whitehaven, Egremont, St Bees and Cleator Moor and review providing grants for the provision of public toilets in other areas.

### **Saving:**

£41,000 per year from April 2013

### **What this means:**

Our public toilets would close unless we could find another organisation to take on their management and maintenance.

Organisations that we grant aid to provide toilets may no longer receive this funding and would need to consider ways to address this.

## **Waste and recycling**

We provide a range of waste and recycling services. These includes our fortnightly bin collection service, green bins for garden waste and a range of recycling services including kerbside collections and bring to sites for cans, glass, paper, compostable waste, plastic and cardboard.

The collection of green waste is not a statutory requirement and our duty regarding recycling is to arrange for the collection of at least 2 items of recyclable household waste.

### **Proposals:**

We are proposing to:

- Charge for the collection of green waste (£35 per property per year)
- Reduce seasonal collection of green waste
- Charge for replacement of wheelie bins (£30 each)
- Stop the collection of kerbside collection of plastic and cardboard

### **Saving:**

This will save £167,000 per year from April 2013.

### **What this means:**

We currently undertake a kerbside collection of plastics and cardboard for recycling for around one third of the homes in the borough. This reflects the funding that was made available at the time to introduce the scheme.

The proposal to withdraw this scheme would affect about 12,000 homes mostly in Whitehaven, Cleator, Frizington and Rowrah. These homes would need to use recycling points in order to recycle plastics and cardboard, as other homes in the borough do.

Charging for replacement wheelie bins could potentially affect all households and changes to the green waste service would also affect everyone who uses the service, who would need to choose whether to pay to continue using it or not.

## **Civic and corporate savings**

Some of our discretionary spending relates to the provision of our statutory services or internal and council running costs. This includes civic and mayoral costs, communications and the cost of the Copeland Centre.

### **Proposal:**

We propose to:

- Reduce the Mayoral budget
- Cease some subscriptions
- Stop producing Copeland Matters in printed format
- Reduce the cost of the Copeland Centre accommodation
- Review our grant provision in line with our priorities and we will be moving these to a service level agreement system.

### **Saving:**

£308,000 per year from April 2013.

### **Impact:**

The Mayor of Copeland would continue in his civic and formal role with reduced support services.

We would cease to subscribe to some corporate services we currently take up.

We would produce Copeland Matters in electronic format, with a small number of copies for local community centres, offices and libraries.

We would reduce the cost of our accommodation at the Copeland Centre.

## Fees and charges

We currently charge the public, service users, businesses and other agencies for some of the services it provides.

Fees and charges offer great scope for to generate income. In the current difficult economic climate, we accept that we need to be realistic when setting our charges and to consider carefully the impact of increased charges on residents and service users.

However, income from fees and charges can help the council with additional income to offset the cuts to our government grants.

Fees and charges essentially fall into 3 main categories;

- Charges that are set nationally e.g. development control fees (currently);
- Charges that can be set locally but which can only meet the cost of providing the service e.g. building control fees;
- Charges that are set locally by ourselves e.g. car parks and crematorium fees.

The areas where we can set its fees and charges are

- Taxi Licensing
- Other Licensing
- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- Car parks

We currently do not set charges in some areas, but may wish to in the future:

- Partnership Projects and Activities
- Business Activities for other agencies
- Possible new charges for waste, pre-application planning advice.

We are keen to ensure that our fees and charges are comparable with our nearest neighbours, that our charges for discretionary services cover costs, and that when we charge management fee for projects, these also cover costs.

## Taxi licensing

We licence hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

### Proposal:

We propose to increase taxi license fees to cover our costs and then increase by inflation year on year.

Type of Licence	Current Fee	Proposed Fees
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	£109	£ 130
Hackney Carriage Driver (a)	£62	£ 70
Private Hire Vehicles	£103	£ 125
Private Hire Drivers	£62	£ 70
Private Hire Operators (3 year)	£120	£ 180

### What this means:

The cost of licences would increase.

## Crematorium and cemeteries

### Proposal:

We propose to increase crematorium and cemeteries fees so they cover their total costs, which include major refurbishment, maintenance and new equipment. We will then increase by inflation year on year as follows:

- 15% increase for 2013/14 for cemeteries fees across all fees. This would mean for example an increase for charges for an interment from £593 to £681.
- 12% increase for 2013/14 for crematorium fees across all fees. This would mean for example an increase for charges for a resident from £624 to £699.

### Income:

The additional income from this proposal will be £60,000.

**What this means:**

The cost of cremations and burials in Copeland would increase to levels which are comparable with other Cumbrian local authorities.

**Car parking**

We also operate and maintain a number of car parks across the Copeland including pay and display ones in Whitehaven, St Bees and Egremont and free community based car parks in a number of locations. Maintenance includes resurfacing, signage and replacing equipment. Our proposal is to change our car parking fees to ensure that they cover all the costs of providing this service.

**Proposal:**

We propose to:

- Increase our car parking charges by the equivalent of an additional 22p on a 1 hour tariff and 70p on a 4 hour tariff to ensure Pay and Display Car Parks are covering their own costs
- Offer some car parks for Community Asset Transfer

**Income:**

The additional income from this proposal is £59,000.

**What this means:**

Car parking charges would increase in our Whitehaven town centre, Egremont and St Bees foreshore car parks.

Community Asset Transfer of a number of free car parks currently provided by us would save on maintenance and running costs.

## Proposals for statutory services

In Copeland a number of local government services are delivered by us. The rest are delivered by Cumbria County Council and in some cases, parish or town councils. Many of the services we provide are statutory. This means we are required by law to ensure that these services are provided. These are our statutory services or **must do's**.

The statutory services we provide affect the everyday lives of everyone in Copeland and are outlined below. These services are wide ranging and have a huge impact on our safety, our environment and our overall health and wellbeing.

### Statutory Services – designed to protect people and place

- Building Control
- Homelessness, Disabled Facilities Grants
- Waste Collection and Recycling
- Council Tax and Housing Benefits
- Health and Safety
- Council tax collection and NNDR collection
- Planning and Development Control
- Tree safety
- Food Safety and Water sampling
- Elections registration and administration
- Licensing
- Land Charges Register
- Environmental enforcement

#### Proposal:

We will reduce the cost of providing statutory services, by ensuring that these services are operated at the level we are obliged to provide.

#### Saving:

We will save about £157,000 over two years.

#### What this means:

We will continue to provide all of the statutory services we are required to and our intention in future is to fund these services in line with their statutory role.

This will mean that some services will see their funding reduced because in the past we have enhanced these services and done more than we are required to do by law.

## **Proposals related to internal services and council running costs**

### **Proposal:**

We will continue to reduce the cost of running the council by:

- Looking for more opportunities to share services with others
- Reducing our transaction costs including enabling residents and businesses to use our website much more
- Further reducing the size of the management team

### **Saving:**

We will save about £480,000 over two years.

### **What this means:**

Like any organisation, some of our outgoings are associated with the costs of running the council. Over the past two years we have done a great deal to reduce these costs. For example, we have already significantly reduced the costs of management by more than £500,000 over the last two years.

Our running costs include: HR; payroll; customer services and cash collection; IT and costs associated with management. Some of the cost is also made up of our buildings and assets like IT equipment.

We need to make sure that we can comply with our legal obligations such as HR law, health and safety at work, HMRC and VAT claims. We also need to insure our buildings, collect revenue and pay for banking services.

We also need to pay our suppliers and staff, manage the way the organisation is run, ensure elected members get the advice they need and serve our customers.

We will continue running the internal services that we need to make the business operate smoothly but will seek to reduce the costs wherever possible.

## **Community Asset Transfer (CAT)**

Community Asset Transfer has become more prominent and is a key feature of the wider Localism agenda, accelerating under the current government and its emphasis on community rights.

Nationally, Community Asset Transfer is increasingly considered as an effective means of achieving a number of objectives.

Community Asset Transfer offers a number of long term benefits to both communities and councils.

For communities, transfer of a public sector asset to a community organisation means putting control, empowerment and ownership closer to communities and building the capacity of local groups. It also leads to regeneration, increased community confidence and more sustainable community organisations.

For councils, Community Asset Transfer can assist in meeting its wider corporate objectives.

### **Council policy**

Our original Asset Transfer Policy was implemented in 2009. A copy of this can be found on our website.

To date transfers of our assets to community groups have been managed on a reactive basis, that is, when we have been approached by a group wishing to acquire an asset on a long leasehold basis, for example.

We plan to revisit our Asset Transfer Policy with a view to taking a proactive approach to asset transfer. A list of assets we consider eligible for transfer is available upon request.

We are currently in negotiation/discussions with groups and Parish Councils relating to the transfer of a number of assets. These assets include:

- Car Park and Public Conveniences
- Football Fields
- Village Green

### **Process and timescales**

It is proposed to adopt a phased approach to the transfer of assets with discussions on certain assets already taking place and dependent on the outcome of this public consultation.

#### **Phase 1**

It is proposed that Phase 1 will commence in January 2013 and consist of the following assets:

- The Civic Hall
- The Cleator Moor Bowls Club and pitch area
- Public Conveniences and where public conveniences are housed on car parks, the associated car park as well
- Car parks and adjacent play areas where applicable

#### **Further phases may involve**

- Allotment sites
- Community Centres
- Sports Pitches
- Nature Reserve
- Skate Parks
- Play Areas

The following process will be operated:-

- At the start of each Phase, we will firstly ask for **expressions of interest** for each of the assets eligible for transfer. In accordance with our policy the current occupiers of the asset, will be given **priority consideration** and will be approached directly prior to the eligible asset being offered more widely.
- Expressions of interest from Parish/Town Councils, community interest companies and companies limited by guarantee having charitable status will then be given priority consideration.
- The transfer either through freehold or leasehold transfer will contain covenants which ensure that the property will continue to be used for community use.

Following this approach, and should no interest be received in taking the asset under the Community Asset Transfer proposals, where appropriate the asset will be **offered for sale on the open market**.

In respect of the Beacon, Civic Hall and Bowls Centre, asset transfer will be subject to the outcome of discussions with existing and potential partners.

### **Allotment sites**

We have a statutory duty to provide allotment sites and although allotments are listed as eligible for asset transfer it is proposed to restrict this to allotment associations formed specifically for the running and management of specific allotment sites.

Transfers will be via leasehold arrangements with strict terms relating to allocation of plots and retained community benefit and reserving the right for the Council to allocate vacant plots to persons who have requested an allotment.

## Next steps

Between **Friday 12 October 2012** and **Friday 7 December 2012** we will be asking for your views on these proposals. You will have a number of opportunities to have your say on how they would affect you and any suggestions you may want to put forward.

To find out more and have your say, you can:

- Attend one of our drop-in sessions (details on the next page)
- Go to our website and complete a survey or add your comments
- Read the special issue of Copeland Matters

**It is important that if you want your views to be considered that you attend a drop in session or complete the response form – either online or in hard copy. That way, we can ensure that your views are recorded and considered.**

Following this, we will analyse the results and consider any alternative proposals or suggestions put forward.

The outcome will inform the rest of our budget process including our statutory budget consultation exercise, which will be focussed on the financial detail of our proposals, including Council Tax levels.

The Executive will then make final recommendations to Full Council for consideration in February 2013.

The budget will be implemented from April 2013 onwards, and all of the proposals taken forward would be in place by March 2015.

**We need your views.**

The survey is available via our website at [www.copeland.gov.uk/future](http://www.copeland.gov.uk/future). You can also request a copy by calling us on 0845 054 8600.

## Drop in sessions

We are holding a series of drop-in sessions where you can come along and find out more about our proposals and give us your views on these.

The sessions are:

Tuesday 20 November	6pm to 7:30pm	Millom Network Centre
Wednesday 21 November	2pm to 4pm	Cleator Moor Civic Hall
Wednesday 21 November	6:30pm to 8:30pm	Methodist Church, Seascale
Tuesday 27 November	2pm to 4pm	Millom Guide Hall
Wednesday 28 November	6:30pm to 8:30pm	Seascale Library
Wednesday 28 November	6:30pm to 8:30pm	Egremont Rugby Union Club
Thursday 29 November	2pm to 4pm	United Reformed Church, Whitehaven
Thursday 29 November	6:30pm to 8:30pm	United Reformed Church, Whitehaven

Everyone is welcome at these sessions.