

Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

REPORT FROM: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge, Director of Customer and Community Services
REPORT AUTHOR: James Young, Scrutiny Officer

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?

This report has the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on the reports presented to the Committee. Those reports were:

- Executive Forward Plan
- Verbal update from the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee
- Verbal update from Single Table Trade Union Group (STTUG)
- Appointment to Single Table Trade Union Group (STTUG)
- Verbal update on Housing from Director of Growth and Inclusive Communities
- High Street Fund Update from Director of Growth and Inclusive Communities
- 2019/2020 Council Performance Plan – Quarter 1
- Voluntary Living Wage Task and Finish Group

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Executive are recommended to:

- (a) Note the update from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (b) To make Copeland Borough Council a Champion for the Voluntary Living Wage;
- (c) Set the aspiration for Copeland to become a Voluntary Living Wage Borough;
- (d) Engage with Sellafield Ltd to adopt the Voluntary Living Wage and assist with recommendation (c);
- (e) If recommendations (b) – (d) are accepted then a communication campaign to be created; and
- (f) Overview and Scrutiny to receive an annual update on progress on the Voluntary Living Wage Borough.

1. DETAIL

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed concern that the Executive Forward Plan did not contain the correct information in relation to when decision were to be made and which committees they were to be presented to. The Committee ask the Executive to maintain the accuracy of the Executive Forward Plan so the OSC can prioritise their workload and ensure effective scrutiny is taking place within the Council.
- 1.2 A member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for the Chair of OSC, who attends the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee on behalf of Copeland Council, to pay particular attention to the perceived inequality of health provision between the north and south of Copeland.

- 1.3 OSC were updated by their representative on the STTUG. The Committee sought clarification on why the minutes from STTUG were no longer to be published on the agenda. The Scrutiny Officer advised that as an internal document it is not suitable to be published.
- 1.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee re-elected Councillor Sam Pollen to be the representative of the Committee on the Single Table Trade Union Group and thanked him for his work thus far.
- 1.5 The Committee were impressed with the progress that has been made on bringing empty homes back into use and have invited the Empty Homes Officer to a future meeting to present their work programme to the committee.
- 1.6 OSC are greatly in favour of the High Street Fund bid. To further their understanding of the bid, and the wider context in which it sits, the committee have requested to receive the Whitehaven Vision, a presentation from the Tourism Officer, information on potential funding opportunities and a follow up presentation from Britain's Energy Coast on the North Shore Regeneration project.
- 1.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress and performance against the Corporate Strategy. The Committee request a presentation on the new Commercial Strategy to understand the commercial opportunities that are available to Copeland Borough Council.

2.0 VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGE

- 2.1 Copeland Borough Council formally adopted the Voluntary Living Wage (VLW) for all employees in November 2012 and implemented the new rates of pay from April 2013. In December 2017 the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the VLW and pay the increased amount recommended by the Living Wage Foundation.
- 2.2 For Copeland Borough Council to become accredited the Voluntary Living Wage Task and Finish group needed to ensure that the Council satisfied the criteria that all contractors that work on behalf of the Council are paid the VLW. The task and finish group have worked with the Procurement Officer and have satisfied the Living Wage Foundation that that is now in place.
- 2.3 Copeland Borough Council became accredited as a Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Foundation on 10 May 2019.
- 2.4 The Executive are asked to make a statement that Copeland Borough Council will champion the Voluntary Living Wage and seek to encourage other businesses and authorities to adopt the VLW.
- 2.5 The Living Wage Foundation has created Living Wage Places that recognizes and celebrates the geographical areas that are doing more to expand Living Wage accreditation. Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that Copeland Borough Council becomes a local 'anchor' for creating the first Living Wage Borough, helping to promote and advise businesses to adopt the VLW.

- 2.6 The Committee recommend that Sellafield are to become another 'anchor' for the creation of a Living Wage Borough and for them to adopt the VLW as the biggest employer in Copeland.
- 2.7 If recommendations b, c and d are accepted the group recommend that a communication campaign should be created to raise awareness of the campaign for Copeland to become the first Living Wage Borough.
- 2.8 An annual report on the VLW be created to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can monitor the progress of Copeland towards the status of Living Wage Borough.

3.0 STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

- 3.1 Legal Comments: No legal issues arise from this report.
- 3.2 Monitoring Officer Comments: There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 3.3 Section 151 Officer Comments: The Council has budgeted to pay the Voluntary Living Wage (VLW). Regarding recommendation (b), there are no direct financial implications for the Council in encouraging other businesses and authorities to adopt the VLW. Regarding recommendation (e), there may be resource implications, staff time and unbudgeted costs, associated with a communication campaign.
- 3.4 EIA Comments: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee adheres to the Council's Equality Scheme and is able to link with the Council's Equality Working Group when appropriate.