

Executive Report to Full Council – 23 June 2015

Strategic Leadership - Mayor Mike Starkie

Finance

The focus for the recent period has been on finalising the position on the expected revenue and capital outturn for the Council. On revenue, following the efforts to maximize savings during the financial year, the provisional outturn delivering a saving of £836k.

The other significant current area of work for the department is the completion of a draft statement of accounts for 2014/15, which is submitted to our external auditors at the end of June, with their full audit scheduled for early August.

Work is also continuing to support ongoing service reviews in the Council, as well as developing an up to date position on the financial strategy of the Council going forward.

Communications

Following the approval of the Communications and Engagement Strategy by CLT, the Communications Team have been moving forward with plans. External communications have moved forward with the second edition of eCopeland Matters is due to be published on June 22.

In the first week of June the team have issued four press releases, which has resulted in positive coverage of council services in the local media. The team have also moved forward with the use of video press releases, short video clips which are sent to local media outlets for use on their news website.

ITV Border have also filmed 'A Day in the Life of an Elected Mayor' which has raised the profile of the borough across the county, focusing on the success of the award winning Beacon Museum. The team has also been testing out equipment to film full Council, to be made available on the council website and Copeland Council YouTube Channel.

Internally, the Communications Team are working on a plan to review all the content on the website, to remove out of date information and update existing content. We will be contacting individual teams for assistance identifying and prioritising the work which will take several months to complete due to the size of the project. During this time we will also be developing a back-up website containing the essential information the public require.

The third edition of the in-house digital magazine, Copeland Chat is also due to be published on July 20 following positive feedback on the first two issues.

Delivering Differently Programme Future Delivery of Services

In April, following a further round of consultation, details were shared with all Staff and Trades Unions about the Service Review process and timetable for completion of the reviews which took into account the feedback we had received. The programme of reviews was extended to the end of June and the greater involvement of staff via Task and Finish Groups was introduced. These groups will help look at options for their services going forward and allow staff to put forward suggestions for savings and delivering differently.

The first Service Review – Waste Services – has been completed and the draft report was considered by CLT and the Trades Unions at the end of May. Further information has been included in the review and the final draft is due to be published in the next week.

Working Differently Programme

Work has now commenced at the Market Hall and the ground floor is stripped out, with scaffolding due to be erected at the beginning of June to enable the external works to be commenced.

Architects have been commissioned to develop the detailed designs for the Copeland Centre. Initial proposals for the furniture and equipment to be used in the new buildings are being developed. All the furniture and equipment used in the newly refurbished Council buildings will be the same across the estate, and common design features will be applied, so these will also be introduced at the Council offices at Moresby Parks and Millom during the final phase of the programme.

The Civic Hall is now occupied with NuGen having its exhibition and office space in the Dunboyne Hall. The Solway Hall re-opened for community use on 29 May 2015. Office accommodation on the top floor is to be let to Inspira, who moved in on 3 June 2015 and a room has been offered to the Whitehaven Town Council, which will mean all of the Civic Hall space is occupied apart from the basement area.

Now that detailed plans relating to specific working arrangements are being developed it is proposed that the Service Managers become more directly engaged with the programme to support the implementation plans, and to help carry the project forward. The detailed plans for the new work environment and the ways of working will be considered with Service Managers after this month, and it is proposed that one or more task and finish groups will be established to finalise these plans and to support their introduction to staff. In relation to Members, this can be considered as part of the joint CLT and Members' Accommodation Working Group which the Mayor has agreed will continue to meet.

Discussions with the potential tenant of the Copeland Centre and the PFI provider are progressing, and these stakeholders remain positive about the programme and are supporting its delivery.

Economic Growth – Deputy Mayor Councillor Lena Hogg

Coastal Initiative

In the wake of our successful application to the Coastal Community Fund for the development of conference space, a learning centre and extended gallery at the Beacon, work has continued to develop and celebrate Copeland's coast. The Coastal Interpretation Boards project is nearing completion, with the imminent installation of the boards along our coast for summer visitors.

Whitehaven Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

Work is progressing on the former YMCA building and a second application has now been approved to start on 45 Market Place.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Our Economic Development function continues to work with external partners and colleagues across the Council to continue to develop viable opportunities that can be considered as part of future Growth Deals and European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) strategies. Through the LEP Technical Officers group, we have worked with partners to support the development of the delivery plan for the LEP Strategic Economic Plan, focused on Advanced Manufacturing, Nuclear and Energy, the Visitor Economy and our infrastructure needs.

Copeland Growth Strategy

Work is ongoing to pull together a Growth Strategy for Copeland that will capture the opportunities for growth and investment in the borough and its infrastructure. The Growth Strategy focuses on key priorities for Copeland such as the ongoing development of the Centre of Nuclear Excellence; the Energy Coast; Workforce, Skills and Education; the Visitor Economy and our Quality of Life. It will also highlight potential opportunities for public/private partnership working to bring forward growth.

Building Control

Building Control has a statutory duty to enforce all building work carried out in the Copeland area, ensuring that buildings are safe, accessible and sustainable for all who use them. In this sense, the quality of the borough's built environment is high, with new projects regularly winning prestigious awards. The service has become an exemplar for other local authorities, who have visited Copeland to view our modern ways of working.

Discretionary services include dealing with demolition work and dangerous structures in the interests of public safety. The number of dangerous structures dealt with by Building Control has increased in recent years due to a combination of the neglect of buildings throughout the recession and severe weather events. Recent well publicised cases dealt with by the service include Whitehaven Bus Station and associated buildings and a gas explosion at Railway Terrace, Seascale.

Site Allocations

The Council ran a 10 week public consultation on the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Site Allocations and Policies Plan Preferred Options* between 12th January and 20th March 2015.

The consultation received quite a lot of interest and has resulted in more than 400 formal responses. Of these:

- 330+ are commenting about individual sites within the consultation document, together with one petition, with the main focus the pieces of land that are proposed as possible gypsy and traveller sites
- Approximately 40 were proposing additional pieces of land for the Council to consider for allocation
- The remainder were providing comments about the proposed policies within the consultation document and other general comments

Council officers are now considering all comments received and will produce a report summarising them during the summer (likely to be August 2015). Following this officers, with approval and oversight by the Local Development Framework Working Party, will then look to produce the final *Pre-Submission Draft Site Allocations and Policies Plan* during the remainder of 2015. It is hoped to have this completed and approved by Full Council for public consultation in spring 2015.

Following consultation in spring 2016, the anticipated timetable is as follows:

- Submit the *Pre-Submission Draft Site Allocations and Policies Plan* to the Secretary of State for Public Examination – Summer 2016
- Public Examination Hearing Sessions – Autumn/Winter 2016
- Receive Inspector's Report – Spring 2017
- Document Adopted by Full Council – Summer 2017

It should be noted that these milestones may be subject to change, if additional unforeseen additional work is required during the production process or prior to submitting the document to the Secretary of State.

Health and Safety Strategy

The health and safety strategy 2015 – 2020 which was brought to the Executive earlier this month is a forward looking document which explains how we will continue to take a coordinated and risk based approach to health and safety, what this means in practice, how the success of the strategy will be measured and how the strategy fits in with the health and safety policy and service based arrangements and finally how we will review the strategy.

The strategy covers:

1. Maintaining and developing as part of continuous improvement our control of risks
2. Supporting employees and managers
3. Reduce injuries and ill health
4. Performance framework
5. Promotion of risk management (sensible and proportionate)

The strategy defines and coordinates the councils approach to managing health and safety.

Housing – Disabled Facilities Grants

We have seen a good number of completions of grants with a good spread of support and type of works across the borough. We continue to receive positive comments from applicant recipients which highlight how the grants enable our residents to live more fulfilling lives.

Homelessness Prevention

Our statistics show that the trend from the last two years is continuing with more prevention activity being undertaken by the team. In May 2015 we worked with 77 households to provide housing advice and prevention. We have accepted five full homeless duties in May under the Housing Act 1996. We are pro-active with partners to get the best support structures in place and in the past few months have reviewed and rewritten the protocols between County Social Services, West Cumberland Hospital and Copeland Council.

Nuclear and Corporate Services – Councillor David Moore

Nuclear New Build

An initial Stage 1 consultation over the proposed nuclear new build development at Moor side is currently underway and closing on the 25th July. All documents can be viewed on line at: <http://www.nugenconsultation.com/> a hard copy is also available in the Members room. The Council's response to consultation will be formulated through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Panel – (NSIPs) which was established to enable effective management of such projects and processes.

The Environmental Impact Assessment documents are also available, formal consultation on this document will not begin until the Council receives a request from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) we will then have 28 days to respond. The closing date coincides with the closing date for comments on the stage 1 consultation.

The Council has appointed ARUP consultants to support the Council with the delivery and technically support the Council in responding to the Development Consent Order (DCO). ARUP will be funded through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the developer NuGen.

Democratic Services

The Democratic Services department has been extremely busy over the last few months. The Electoral Services team delivered four very successful elections on 7th May which was a major achievement as we have never before had elections on this scale at Copeland. The team is now continuing the clear up work from the elections, and is also preparing for the first full annual household canvass under the new Individual Electoral Registration process which will start in July and continue through until December when the new register of electors will be published.

The Member Services team has been busy running the induction and training programme for councillors and helping new councillors to familiarise themselves with the role and procedures. The training programme will continue into the autumn and should ensure that all members are properly equipped to carry out their role.

Alongside this the Member Services team has now set up and started using the new Mod Gov committee software system to publish committee agendas and minutes. The ICT Strategy for Members which was agreed in April 2015 has been rolled out and by now all councillors should have their smartphones and most will have received their tablets. The move away from laptops and blackberries will save the council money and the use of the Mod Gov app to allow paperless delivery of agendas will provide further substantial savings on printing and postage costs.

ICT Strategy 2015 -2017

The Council's ICT Strategy for 2015-2017 was approved by the Executive on 24 April. It was also agreed that as part of ensuring the effective delivery of the ICT Strategy that the revenue budgets for all spend on software and hardware will be consolidated into a central budget held by the ICT Team to ensure optimal strategic fit of any ICT-related procurement. This will be managed through an ICT Steering Group who will also ensure an ICT Delivery Plan is developed and monitored.

Customers and Communities – Councillor Dave Banks

Copeland Work & Skills Partnership

Members of Copeland's Work & Skills Partnership are developing measures and projects to help address local skills gaps and to support local access into the nuclear supply chain. In line with this, Partnership members and the Council have been engaging with the LEP to look at potential calls for applications against Skills Funding Agency, Department of Work & Pensions and Big Lottery fund, linked with the refresh of the LEP's Cumbria Skills Plan.

We are currently supporting Morgan Sindall and Arup with their Creating Careers in Cumbria scheme with the aim of maintaining the success of the first scheme, that saw over half of the

30 participants find employment as a result. Copeland Borough Council is supporting more directly this time around, by taking on three candidates during their work experience phase to support them in accessing and gaining the most benefit from the programme.

Community Partnerships Together

This project is progressing well to time and budget. The updated annual review has shown that the team has brought in over £4M in project funds over the past two years and supported over 70 volunteers to engage in economic development and local regeneration. This final year will concentrate on sustainable legacy

Young Peoples Priorities

On 10th April, Copeland Borough Council facilitated a youth focused mayoral debate aimed and encouraging young people into the wider discussion surrounding the mayoral elections. The event was well attended and provoked some interesting and focused debate.

Beacon

The Beacon made a surplus in the first year of its fully commercial collaborative operation. The Beacon Pass has been introduced and is gathering pace with more families visiting the Beacon. This is supported by our increasing social media presence and our new website. The Beacon attracted a new audience from a recent Buddhist Cultural Event which was over-subscribed and looking to develop more such events. We have re-invigorated the Beacon engagement with schools through developing a whole day package including the Museum and heritage and harbour trails. The Beacon is looking forward to National Archaeology Day on 11th July when it will be looking at the “Mysteries of Victorian Whitehaven”. We are preparing for the externally funded development of the Beacon which is planned to start on site on July 2015. Five new staff have joined the Beacon to increase the capacity as set out in the Collaborative Business Plan 2014-19.