COPELAND ANNUAL MEETING WITH PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Minutes of a Meeting of the Copeland Annual Meeting with Parish and Town Councils held on Wednesday, 22 September 2010 at 6:30 pm at Cleator Moor Civic Hall.

PRESENT:

Mr FI Morgan (Chair)
Mr GRMP Roberts
Mrs W Skillicorn
Mr DE Southward
Mr A Wonnacott
Mr J Woolley

Mrs P Altree - Millom Town Council
Ms S Brown - Haile & Wilton Parish Council
Mr P Connolly - Arlecdon and Frizington Parish Council
Mr B Crawford - Millom Town Council
Mr J Davis - Lamplugh Town Council
Ms E Eastwood - Seascale Parish Council
Mrs G Everett - Arlecdon and Frizington Parish Council
Ms H Gilmour - Cleator Moor Town Council
Mr K Hitchin - Drigg and Carleton and Waberthwaite Parish Councils
Ms L Hogg - Egremont Town Council
Mrs J Hully - Cleator Moor Town Council
Ms A Jones - Ulpha Parish Meeting
Mr G Linaker - Wasdale Parish Council
Mrs J Oakley - Ennerdale and Kinniside Parish Council
Mr C Shaw - Moresby and Parton Parish Councils
Mr G Smith - St Bees Parish Council
Mr N Southward - Waberthwaite and Corney Parish Councils
Mr C Willoughby - Seascale Parish Council
Mrs C Woodburn - Egremont Town Council

Also in Attendance:-

Mrs J Currie - Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mr J Marriott - Area Support Manager
Mr K Melville - Area Engineer
Mr N Raymond - Better Highways Project Team
Mr J Smith - Better Highways Project Team

1. WELCOME

The Chair introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from members of Cumbria County Council Local Committee for Copeland were received from Mrs S E Brown, Mr N Clarkson, Mr R S Cole, and Mr A C Ross.

Apologies for absence from the Town/Parish Councils were received as follows:-


3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 23 September 2009 be agreed with the following amendments:-

On Minute No 4 – MRWS the last sentence should refer to the Clerk to Parton Parish Council and not the Chairman.

On Minute No 8.2 – Inkerman Terrace – delete parish in line 1.

4. BETTER HIGHWAYS PROJECT - PRESENTATION

Officers gave members a presentation on the Better Highways Project, which was a review of the service currently being provided by Cumbria Highways through the County Council, Amey LG and Capita Symonds. In using a new approach to assessing highway maintenance performance the findings of the review had shown failings in the current system and the serious delays experienced in dealing with reported highway faults. A thorough review of the way in which problems were dealt with had been carried out and a much more streamlined system developed.

The proposed model to be introduced involved the setting up of 2 man Find and Fix Teams supported by an Area Steward with whom direct contact would be made for work to be carried out. Highways faults would be passed directly to the team carrying out the work rather than through a series of reporting stages with the aim of getting a “Right First Time” fix of any highway faults. Each team would have their own local “patch” thus creating a sense of ownership of highway problems in their area. The new system was being piloted in Eden and was proving to be very successful. A roll out in the Copeland area was expected to take place later in the year.

Members were advised that the performance of the service would be measured against the percentage of defects repaired “Right First Time” and the time taken between receiving the demand and completing a final repair (“End to End” time). It was acknowledged that there should be records kept of, for example, drainage
systems, and a mapping system introduced showing reported defects, but in the meantime a knowledge base would be built up through the area based teams.

Initially Parish Councils would continue to report on any defects in relation to the highway network, however it was anticipated that after a period of time the area teams themselves would identify the problems as they carried out their duties. With regard to the Highways Stewards they would be deployed within the new teams but would remain in their areas and maintain links with the Parishes.

Benefits of the Model

- Builds on the success of the Highway Stewards, maintaining the Parish links
- Deals with the underlying cause of defects
- Enables a Right First Time fix
- Improves the overall condition of the network
- Directs resource to fixing the network rather than filling pot holes several times
- Gives local ownership to the crews & builds pride in the network.

The next stage of the project would be:-

- Application of Systems Thinking to Capital Schemes.
- Whole service integration on Area basis
- Local call handling capability being progressed.
- Embed Operating Principles and Purpose into operations
- Countywide Roll In
- Ongoing feedback and reporting

Some of the parishes had concerns about the use of the Highway Stewards as they felt the County Council had presumed that all stewards were of the same standard which in reality was not actually true. There were good ones and bad ones and members were disappointed that this had been designed without any input from colleagues in parish and town councils, nor people in the localities concerned.

Officers said the plan was not to impose a fixed model on localities but for these models to be developed and evolved over time based on the needs in each area.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation.

5. COUNCIL PLAN CONSULTATION 2011/12

The Area Support Manager explained that the County Council had recently launched the first stage of the county council’s programme of public consultation on the 2011 – 14 Council Plan. The plan sets out what the County Council was trying to achieve and how it would deliver the services that really mattered to residents.
Given the government’s announcement in June of local authority budget cuts, with more announcements to follow in October, it’s more important than ever that the council hears about which services the public valued the most, and how they thought services could be delivered differently in the future.

During this first phase of consultation, from 13 September to 11 October the council wants feedback on which of the services the public think were absolutely essential, and which they felt were extras.

At this stage the County Council was not asking for thoughts on specific changes to particular services but would use feedback from this first stage to develop more detailed plans which views would be asked for on later in the autumn. At the end of the year opinions would again be sought on final recommendations, before councillors made a decision on 17 February 2011.

RESOLVED that the consultation be received and noted.

6. MRWS PARTNERSHIP


A year ago partners agreed to a mandate and position statement for officers from CALC to represent parishes on the MRWS. The purpose of today was to take stock of where the partnership was and to answer any questions partners had.

Throughout the year CALC had issued a number of bulletins by email to keep partners up to date. Mr Richardson said if anyone else wanted to receive a copy of these bulletins let him know.

An information sheet had been issued with papers for today’s meeting but the Advisor notified partners that over the past 24 hours significant developments had taken place which he updated the meeting on.

A key public meeting on whether west Cumbria would host an underground nuclear dump had been cancelled because the Government has not agreed to fund the group behind it. The West Cumbria MRWS had been scheduled to meet at the Hunday Manor Hotel, near Workington, next week, but the new Government had not yet agreed to fund the partnership’s research. Partners had asked for an urgent meeting with Energy Minister Charles Hendry to discuss the situation.

The Chairman of the MRWS had said a repository for high level radioactive waste would affect people in this area for many generations to come, and all the issues needed to be considered properly. It was important to ensure there was certainty about the level of funding that would be available from Government before continuing this work.
The list of dates for Community Events in the recent bulletin would still be taking place but the dates published would be changed. All partners were asked to note this.

The Chair thanked Mr Richardson for the update.

7. **COPELAND AREA PLAN**

The Area Support Manager explained that in previous years attempts had been made to develop a Copeland Local Plan on behalf of the County Council Local Committee for Copeland. These had only partially been successful with the resulting plans helping little in guiding and prioritising activities and services.

This year had seen added impetus to the local planning process with the Committee’s new Chairman leading the drive to produce a robust plan which could assist in defining local priorities to guide service prioritisation and delivery. In addition the Council had embedded in the new constitutional arrangements for Local Committees a requirement for them to produce a local plan which had been presented to, and approved by Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** that the plan be noted.

8. **LOCALITY WORKING**

The County Council Local Committee for Copeland’s Area Support Manager presented a report which set out the current situation on locality working in Copeland from Copeland Local Committee perspective following a request to do so for this meeting.

Members were aware that locality working had been “on the agenda” for public bodies across Cumbria for over 4 years now, since before the publication of the Government’s White Paper, “Strong and Prosperous Communities” in October 2006.

Across Cumbria the concept had passed through various incarnations including Community Boards, Locality Boards, Local Area Partnerships, Enhanced Parish Clusters, Locality Partnerships and others.

However, what was clear was that the name was less important than the content and form. In Cumbria there was now wide acceptance of a model and over-arching concept of locality working which was based on that developed by the Young Foundation. This could be described as having 3 strands:-

- Community Governance,
- Community Engagement &
- Responsive Service Delivery
This model was further developed in the context of the inter-relationships between these three strands. In Copeland the Borough Council had been able to dedicate staff resources to the development and roll-out of locality partnerships. Within the West Cumbria Sustainable Community Strategy “Future Generation”, the geographies of the localities were defined. This set out 5 localities across Copeland. As recent developments had taken place, it had become clear that the Howgate/Distington area strongly wished to be seen as an area in its own right and so effectively there would be 6 localities across Copeland. These being:

- Howgate/Distington
- Whitehaven
- North East Copeland
- West Copeland
- 5 Rivers area
- South Copeland

The names of these areas were not set in stone but had more or less been defined by local people themselves.

Progress had been slow but steady and a summary document which described the current situation across all the localities was attached with the report. This was prepared and presented at the recent “Localities Together” meeting on 1 September 2010.

From the County Council’s Local Committee perspective, it welcomed the development of locality partnerships which would help define local priorities and enable local communities to better influence public service providers. These locality partnerships were a core part of enabling Copeland Local Committee to fulfil its delegated functions.

Members may be interested to note that the existence of the developing locality partnerships in Copeland and their work on local planning enabled a much stronger locality focus in the development of the County Council’s Area Plan for Copeland than would otherwise have been possible.

The County Council Local Committee continued to support the development of locality working across Copeland and supported the involvement of elected members in local partnerships in support of their community leadership role as democratically elected councillors.

All present recognised that the Boundary Commission was currently undertaking work in relation to boundaries throughout Cumbria and felt that it would be worth holding a more detailed discussion about localities once the outcome of this work was known.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and noted.
9. **LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS**

**RESOLVED** that the Local News & Views Newsletter be received and noted.

10. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 September 2011 at 6.30pm at Cleator Moor Civic Hall.

11. **CLOSING COMMENTS**

At the end of the meeting the Chair said there would be some difficult decisions to be made in the near future once the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review was known in October. There would be an even greater need for working together collectively to try to reduce the effects on the members of the public. He thanked everyone for attending and wished them all a safe journey home.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm