

PORTFOLIO:

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
MRS J GEDDES**

KEY DECISIONS

All key decisions are as in the minutes of Executive decisions.

NON KEY DECISIONS

All non-key decisions are in the minutes of the Executive decisions.

CONNECTED CUMBRIA

The second of the Connected Cumbria Partnership Member's days was held on the 16th of September at Rheged, Penrith. The key note speaker was Dr Peter Blair from the ODPM. The theme of his speech was 'hints and tips' on completing the IEG3 statement (Implementing Electronic Government round 3) submission due in late November 2003.

He was followed by officers from two authorities, South Lakeland and Copeland, giving their experiences on implementing the e-government agenda to date.

The final speaker was Tim Chesworth from the Staffordshire partnership who gave an interesting insight into the partnership's programme & governance showing strong member involvement, this was echoed by partnership chair Councillor Alan Compton.

The next Member's day is planned for January 2004.

NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATION

Regional Overview Committee

I attended the regional Overview Committee on Monday 22 September 2003 at Riverside, Manchester. For the third year running I have been re-elected Chairman for the forthcoming year. Terms of reference were agreed and a work programme identified for the next 12 months.

I attended a Personnel Briefing at Harrogate on 02 and 03 October 2003.

A folder containing relevant slides has been placed in the Members Library for information.

MEMBER AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A new appraisal scheme is to be introduced to replace current Personal Development Interviews (PDI's) as part of the authorities commitment to staff development.

The Member Development Framework has been designed to mirror the scheme introduced for staff. Visits by Members to Crewe & Nantwich, Preston and Halton were carried out to see first hand good practices within these authorities in relation to Member Development. Feedback from cross-party Members has been very positive.

These schemes have been designed to motivate, consider career aspirations, as well as identifying individual development by linking the authority to corporate priorities.

Member Learning & Development in the 21st Century

Feedback from workshops from the Conference held at Northumbria County Council on 09 October 2003 included examples of best practice around England and Wales. The benefits of the Leadership Academy Course was debated, the contents of which included the management of officers and community groups. Northumberland Members all spoke highly of the course embracing the softer interpersonal skills involved. All admitted that their own styles adopted different techniques for getting things done in different situations but that it proved helpful.

Many authorities used non-executive Members as champions to cause community issues regarding e.g. pensioners, young people, pedestrians, motorists etc., which encouraged joined up action – any member, regardless of party could do this.

All said Member Development must be Member led including having a champion (someone with enough energy to drive it forward). It was agreed that authorities needed to clarify skills and roles for members within a framework.

REDUNDANT I.T. EQUIPMENT

After placing adverts in the press the Council was successful of disposing of most of its redundant PC's to community based organisations and charities. A waiting list is being compiled in order that redundant equipment can be disposed of as it arises.

BORDER VISIONS CONFERENCE 2003

This years Border Visions Conference was held in Dumfries on 09 and 10 October 2003 and is the fourth annual conference. This was an appropriate time to assess the progress that has been made with the Border Visions Agenda and where it should go in the future.

The Conference was chaired by the writer and broadcaster, Eric Robson. Lessons and opportunities around devolution and the Anglo Scottish border were debated.

There were four workshop sessions, which covered support for rural businesses, transportation, tourism, and food issues. Each workshop had to make a bid for the £40,000 held by the partners to support borders initiatives.

I attended the workshop on Supporting the Rural Economy a summary is included in the information pack.

The afternoon of the conference considered the importance of forestry in the Border economy and the fact that many forests will be maturing at the same time, thus creating huge potential markets for wood products and raising issues about transportation and the location of production / processing units.

A sub-group of the partnership will be meeting to look at this issue and best plan for future sustainable forestry and the allied industries.

The conference also considered the future of the Border Visions initiative and it was recognised that there had been benefits from the Council's and partners meeting together to understand institutional and organisational diversities and to develop a shared understanding of economic, social and environmental similarities in the Border area.

The conferences have thus far focussed on the rural regeneration agenda and there was unanimous agreement that the conference should continue. It was also agreed that the remit and membership should be broadened to take in issues such as health, young people, social welfare, culture and leisure and that the conference should continue to be supported by joint working outside of the main conference arena.

To prepare for the hosting of next year's conference an officer steering group is to be established to make the necessary arrangements.

An information pack can be found in the Members Library.

CUSTOMER CONTACT

From Monday 13 October all reception services have been transferred to the ground floor of the Civic Centre. Previously the public were expected to find their way to any number of receptions scattered throughout the Civic Centre.

Now all members of the public will be attended to on the ground floor. With the exception of those members of the public attending meetings on the first floor there is no need for the public to go anywhere else within the building. This delivers on one of the points raised by the Customer Contact Best Value Review and should be welcomed as a significant improvement to the Council's customer service to the public.

DSO TRANSFER

The thanks of the Carlisle Housing Association IT Manager have been received for the part of our IT Unit played in the successful DSO transfer. Acknowledging the work the Unit undertook to deliver the transfer successfully, he pointed out that without the extra assistance given the transfer of the IT element of the operation would have failed. This external verification of the professionalism and high quality of the work unit is gratifying.