

Agenda item 9(b)
(iii)

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

None made.

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

NORTH WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYERS ORGANISATION

As the Authority's representative on this outside body I have been elected to sit as a Member of the Executive Board and also chairman of The Regional Overview Committee.

The Executive will look at the future of the organisation over the next five years and how it can continue to support Local Authorities.

The Regional Overview Committee identified potential items of interest for their workload as:

- State benefits/taxes and elected Member allowances.
- Human Resource issues related to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.
- Mentoring schemes for newly elected Members
- Human Resource implications of e-Government/accessible services.
- Diversity issues.
- Recruitment and retention in Local Government.

PERSONNEL BRIEFING - HARROGATE - 26 & 27 SEPTEMBER 2002

This years northern personnel briefing was held once again at Harrogate and was attended by our Personnel Officer. This conference was certainly the best supported – particularly from the North West – since the event was established.

The overall theme reinforced the message that rapid change and the modernising agenda were all about improving services to people. *Mary Winterhausen* speaking on e-Government emphasised how intrinsic the electronic communications revolution was to connecting with the people we serve.

Mick Hannon, Lead Inspector with the Audit Commission, gave details of the "dreaded CPA" inspections currently being carried throughout the country. Although there was little new said about the process, he declared emphatically that the purpose was not punitive but, to concentrate the

collective Local Government mind on assessing their present service delivery and strategic planning. The hope being that such self-critical appraisal would result in a sharper focus and outcomes that directly benefit the consumer.

Johnathan Trubshaw from the Employer's Organisation, gave a down to earth and helpful presentation on Effective People Management. This included examples of good practice and suggested strategies for dealing with such thorny issues and reducing illness absence, fostering equalities and work/life balance.

Jane Wren of Employers Organisation's Dialogue Team, gave an interesting and informative presentation on Equality Standards for Local Government. She went on to highlight the importance of a Corporate Equality Plan for Authorities, which should include targets and objectives for implementing equality across all services.

The conference was a positive experience from delegates not only to hear highly professional speakers but to exchange information with colleagues who have similar problems.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

A Government review of Emergency Planning is ongoing, and new legislation is likely after post 9/11 which will considerably raise the profile and increase the responsibilities of Local Authorities.

Additional workloads will include:

- The establishment of County Coordinators Group supported by other Cumbrian Districts (County Emergency Planning Unit).
- Enhanced national, regional information flows.
- The need to plan more effectively for mutual support, cross border issues and wider area capability.
- Planning for specific new risks (e.g. mass decontamination).
- Government and Emergency Services enhanced expectations of both risk and the need for all involved to prepare more pro-actively.

Reports on the progress of emergency planning review update will be brought to future meetings of the Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

EAST CUMBRIA COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

Membership of this organisation has been extended from August 2002 to August 2004 or until such time as Community Health Councils are abolished by Government. This was done to ensure consistency during the transition to the new arrangements

A joint meeting to cover all North Cumbria Community Health Councils will take place on Tuesday 22 October 2002 at Hundith Hill Hotel near Cockermouth. There will be a presentation by Mr. Chris Macklin, Director of Finance (North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust), which will include financial position, cancer services and Acute Hospitals Review.

Forthcoming CHC visits will include:

- Orthopaedic Department, Cumberland Infirmary.
- Assessment Therapy and Elderly Care, Cumberland Infirmary.
- Maternity Unit, Penrith Hospital
- Westmorland House and Syra House, Carleton Clinic, Carlisle
- Alston Hospital

Members will be updated on what will replace Community Health Councils.

THIRD ANGLO-SCOTTISH BORDERS CONFERENCE

03 & 04 OCTOBER 2002-10-21

The conference opened with a welcome reception at Slaley Hall Hotel, Northumberland, and speakers from Northumberland County, Berwick upon Tweed and Tynedale Councils.

Eric Robson chaired the main conference and welcomed, several leading speakers from industry, Local Government and Ross Finney MSP, Minister for the Environment and Rural Development from the Scottish Executive.

The future for food and farming in the Borders was debated, especially with the impact of Foot and Mouth on the area. Cross border cooperation in the economic generation, especially with the emerging regional assemblies in England.

Rural recovery – A question and answer session took place on a report from the Capital Centre Border Studies on the impact of foot and mouth and rural recovery measures across the English & Scottish Borders

A presentation on the Borders Broadband Projects and the Governments role in supporting broadband developments took place involving the Pathfinder Project Steering Group of the areas.

A report from the Centre for Borders Studies on transport policy issues across the borders included discussions on extending the Waverley Line southwards from Edinburgh.

The next steps:

1. Developing the recommendations for economic regeneration in the Research Report on Foot and Mouth Recovery Plans.
2. Developing recommendations for transport in the Research Report on Transport Plans.
3. Taking forward tourism ideas and issues.
4. Taking forward joint working in food production and marketing.

A full Border Visions pack will be available in the Members Bookcase for additional information.

TRAINING

CUMBRIA TRAINING OFFICERS GROUP – MEMBER EVENT 2002

NEWTON RIGG 17 OCTOBER 2002

This event was arranged by representatives of the eight local authorities within Cumbria plus Cumbria Constabulary and North West Employers Organisation and the title of this year's event was "Delivering Equality Standards within Cumbria".

The main objectives of the day included:

- Members to understand the legal requirements in the area of equalities.
- Members to be aware of the Local Government Equalities Standard; Race Equality Scheme; Best Value Performance Indicators on fair access.
- How prejudice and discrimination link to policy formulation and practice.
- Understand how one public authority in Cumbria is raising awareness, personal and organisational values and practice.
- Raise awareness of other aspects of discrimination links to social inclusion and rural isolation.
- The Members role in taking the agenda forward.

The objectives were achieved by the attendance of speakers from the Employers Organisation, the Audit Commission and a Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion from Shropshire County Council and various interactive exercises and scenarios carried out throughout the day.

Members who reported back said that this seminar gave very positive feedback on Equal Opportunities Policy and its implementation.