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COVERING SHEET FOR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Title of Report **Cumbria Foot and Mouth Disease Inquiry Recommendations**
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Committee **Council**
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Author **Stephen Greenhalgh**
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Part I or II **I**
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Public Summary Enclosed: Yes/Not Applicable
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No of Appendices **None**
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Draft No
.....

DRAFT

Checklist

Persons Consulted:

Key Partners working on each recommendation

Corporate Parenting Implications:

(i.e. for Councillors as corporate parents or implications for looked after children)

Environmental Implications:

Impacts are listed under Environmental heading and led by Head of Environment

Crime and Disorder Implications:

(i.e. any implications for reducing or preventing crime and disorder)

Human Rights Act:

(Advice should be sought from Brian Walker, Head of Legal Services)

Cleared by Chief Officer/Unit Manager

..... Stephen Greenhalgh

Copied to Director of Finance and Central Services

Head of Legal Services

Other Directors (please list)

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.....
.....
Head of Members Service Unit

Council Spokesperson/Chair

Date of Pre-Agenda Meeting

Final Report Yes/No

COUNTY COUNCIL	Paper No.
Meeting date: 16 September 2004	
From: CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT	

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CUMBRIA FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 In 2001/02 Cumbria was at the epicentre of the foot and mouth disaster experiencing 44% of all farms with outbreaks. It was a dreadful period for the people of Cumbria. The Cumbria Inquiry into Foot and Mouth Disease was published in September 2002. This report summarises the progress that has been made to address its 31 recommendations.

2.0 POLICY POSITION, BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS, AND LINKS TO CORPORATE STRATEGY

2.1 The Cumbria FMD Inquiry process entailed formal hearings, meetings with key organisations and local public meetings and was followed by a comprehensive report. This included key lessons learnt from Cumbria's experience to assist wider national progress, adding significantly to the conclusions of other inquiries that have reported over the summer of 2002.

2.2 The Cumbria Foot and Mouth Inquiry findings were presented to the Cumbria Taskforce on 6 September 2002 and endorsed by Cumbria County Council on 19 September 2002. Initial follow-up was through a Cabinet Sub-Committee.

2.3 Developing a diverse, competitive, sustainable economy is a key priority for Cumbria County Council. This includes support for Rural Regeneration Cumbria and West Lakes Renaissance. There are no new budgetary implications in this report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Members are asked to recommend that Cumbria County Council (CCC):

- DRAFT**
- a) *Recognises the positive overall progress that has been made with regard to addressing the 31 Inquiry recommendations.*
 - b) *Continues to work with DEFRA (relevant Government departments and other partners) locally and nationally on specific recommendations, including the development of detailed local contingency plans, a resolution to outstanding payments, tourism 'insurance' and health research.*
 - c) *Thanks Professor Thomas (Chair of the Cumbria Inquiry) for his detailed assessment of progress, for his encouraging comments with regard to the concerted effort that has been made in Cumbria and for his advice on further follow-up actions.*
 - d) *Arranges corporate briefings for Members, officers and colleagues on the key changes that have taken place since 2001 to ensure improved preparedness within the County Council and its key partners.*

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Cumbria Inquiry published its findings in September 2002. Its 31 recommendations were recognised by the EU. A time limited sub-committee began the work of pursuing with colleagues, departments and organisations locally and nationally the actions required.

4.2 Work has included presentations made by Lord Inglewood to Lord Whitty using written parliamentary questions.

4.3 This report is an assessment of progress two years after the Inquiry was published.

4.4 It should be remembered that although the last outbreak was in September 2001, clean-up, recovery and access work continued well into 2002. The last right of way was finally opened in June 2002. Furthermore, although the people of Cumbria have showed great courage during the outbreak and determination to put the disaster behind them, the effects for many will remain for years to come.

4.5 Recovery from Foot and Mouth Disease should also be understood within the wider context of ongoing social and economic pressures described in the Sub-Regional Strategy, Community Strategies and Parish Plans.

Current Situation

4.6 In assessing progress on each recommendation it is considered that in the unfortunate event of another 'emergency' of this nature, Cumbria is in a better position because there is/are:

(*Numbers refer to Cumbria Inquiry recommendations)

Planning, Resources and Management

- A new DEFRA Contingency Plan in place (1*)
- There is a much improved local understanding between key partners of roles and requirements developed through regular ongoing meetings and dialogue (1/2)
- There are improved states of alert and alert systems(2)
- A new robust and more practical approach to movement restrictions (3)
- Significant research being undertaken with regard to disease spread (4)
- Severely reduced likelihood of 'on farm' disposal (4)
- Enhanced epidemiological support in place through the establishment of an expert group (6/9)

Biosecurity

- Performance data available in respect of import controls (7)
- Improved biosecurity at markets, policed by Trading Standards and through the 6-day standstill regime (8)

Economic, Environmental and Social Impacts

- Risk assessments in place [unlike 2001], including for footpath closure (11/12)
- The law regarding general area footpath closure has been repealed [and restricted infected areas are 3km] (13)
- CCC has placed all Rights of Way on GIS; this will improve flexibility and management of responses to potential access issues (13)
- Cumbria County Council has developed a Countryside Access Strategy including the creation of a Local Access Forum (15/16)
- The County Council has built on the Task Force model and worked to establish the Cumbria Strategic Partnership that works closely with Cumbria's four local Strategic Partnerships (16)

- Cumbria Economic Intelligence Partnership provides key information to assist economic recovery and informs the evidence base of the new Sub Regional Strategy (18)
- Excellent progress has occurred at Distington and Watchtree landfill sites, the latter is now a nature reserve with special habitats (22/23)
- Significant progress has been achieved in mapping burial sites including a public register; a map of site locations will be published later in the year (24)
- Research into the health effects of FMD has been completed by the University of Lancaster is currently being reviewed through the NHS and will be published in the Autumn. A presentation will be made to Cabinet around the time of publication (25)

Looking to the Future

- The Council made representations to the Minister Alun Michael and were influential in persuading the Minister to nominate Cumbria as a Rural Action Zone. This has been prompted nationally as a foundation for innovative development. The County Council established Rural Regeneration Cumbria (RRC) in partnership with NWDA thereby bringing together UK and EU rural funding streams, knowledge and expertise. (26/27)
- Improved joint working with the farming industry includes the Farm Connects Cumbria initiative (28)
- Cumbria Tourist Board is much stronger with an increased membership to over 2,200 businesses (29)
- The International Centre for the Uplands (ICU) was established in May 2004 and will develop front-line research which will benefit Cumbria and other upland areas (30)
- Cumbria County Council has a recognised 'Rural Matters' programme in place (that complements the work of the RRC and ICU) to ensure a much improved overview of rural recovery throughout the county's diverse communities.
- The Rural Matters programme includes establishing a process to rural proof all its policies and special support for rural community businesses and services (31)

4.7 In assessing progress on each recommendation it is considered that in the unfortunate event of another 'emergency' of this nature work is still required to:

Planning Resources and Management

- Strengthen contingency planning at a very practical local level. (1/2)
- Resolve the dispute between Cumbria County Council (along with its waste disposal company, Cumbria Waste Management Ltd.) and DEFRA regarding 'Outstanding Disputes and Payment' which could create uncertainty during an

Economic, Environmental and Social Impacts

- Avoid a repetition of the harsh financial difficulties that the tourism industry experienced (17)
- Address the recommendations of research into the health effects of FMD (25)
- Ensure that in the event of another crisis of this nature, actions taken to eradicate a disease such as foot and mouth would be determined by all key economic factors

4.8 Cumbria County Council has made considerable efforts to pursue the delivery of the Inquiry recommendations. This has included liaison with a wide range of departments and organisations, locally and nationally, some having the main responsibility with regard to specific recommendations.

4.9 The Council's determination to support rural communities since 2001 has involved cooperation, innovation and practical action. It has included:

- Immediate reaction to foot and mouth disease through the delivery of a 'First Aid for Cumbria' special grants programme that supported over 100 local community projects.
- Close working with partners including North West Development Agency (NWDA) to establish the Rural Regeneration Company that [complements the Urban Regeneration Company (URC) and] provides specialist economic support, advice and finance to rural communities.
- Working to establish the International Centre for the Uplands, launched in May 2004 through the University of Lancaster to ensure that Cumbria is at the forefront of practical research to benefit rural communities.
- Facilitating the transformation of the burial site at Watchtree with local people, English Nature and Cumbria Wildlife Trust into a special nature reserve.
- Establishing a Rural Matters programme to add value and cooperation across all work on rural issues in support of Cumbria's diverse communities.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 Members can choose to accept the recommendations of this report.

5.2 Members can choose to amend or reject the recommendations of this report.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Cumbria FMD Inquiry emphasised that the lessons from the 2001 outbreak need to be learned, remembered and pursued at local and national levels.
- 6.2 Significant progress has been made since the Inquiry Report was published in 2002 but there is no sense of complacency. Pressure is being maintained to complete specific recommendations identified in this report.
- 6.3 Members recognise that the people of Cumbria have made a determined effort to move on from this catastrophe with its wide ranging consequences but this is hindered by wider economic difficulties.

Stephen Greenhalgh
August 2004

APPENDICES

No appendices

IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: None
Financial: None
Electoral Division(s): All

** Please remove whichever option is not applicable*

Executive Decision

Yes* No

Key Decision

Yes* No

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

Yes* No

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

Yes No

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

Yes No N/A*

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Report to Cumbria County Council, 19 September 2002
Report of FMD Inquiry Sub-Committee, 20 March 2003

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cumbria Inquiry September 2002

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

Cllr Toft, Leader Cumbria County Council

Contact Officer

Stephen Greenhalgh, Head of Community Tel: 01539 773400

stephen.greenhalgh@cumbriacc.gov.uk