

<b>COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR COPELAND</b>
<b>Meeting date: 15 March 2023</b>
<b>From: Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services</b>

## **COPELAND LOCAL COMMITTEE - FINAL REPORT**

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1 *The purpose of this report is to celebrate the achievements of Copeland Local Committee at its' final meeting. As the County Council will cease to exist with effect from 31 March 2023, it is appropriate that this local committee, as the local voice of the County Council, looks back on what it has experienced and achieved in its last 5 years under the current administration.***

### **2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

**2.1 *The Copeland Local Committee has both executive and non-executive duties as set out in the County Council's constitution.***

**2.2 *At its meeting on 6 May 2022, the local committee reviewed and stated its priorities for delivery in its final 12 months as:***

- *Improving outcomes for Young People***
- *Encouraging individuals, households and communities to live well and thrive***
- *Supporting individuals, households and communities to engage, and to feel enabled and empowered.***

**2.3 *The Children and Young People's Partnership as part of the local committee has adopted the priority outcome of Improving Outcomes for Young People.***

**2.4 *The work of the local committee contributes to the achievement of the Council Plan 2018-2022 vision which is to be***

- *A Council that works with residents, businesses and communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.***

**2.5 *The outcomes of this vision are:***

- ***People in Cumbria are healthy and safe***
- ***Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving***
- ***The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone***

**2.6 *There are no negative equality implications arising out of the recommendations of this report.***

**3.0 *RECOMMENDATIONS***

**3.1 *Members note the contents of the report.***

**4.0 *BACKGROUND***

Copeland Local Committee has been in existence since April 2001 with a purpose at that time described as “optimising the use of Council assets and resources in their area; to influence Council policies and strategies affecting their area; and through the "whole area approach", to work with communities and partner organisations to enable public services to be shaped locally, to achieve the best possible outcomes within available resources.” It is made up of 12 County Councillors who represent the 12 divisional areas across Copeland. The relevant chapter from the Constitution is attached at Appendix 1.

Local committees perform three main functions:

- Make decisions
- Influence decisions made by others
- Receive and disseminate information.

All of this is performed with the local area of Copeland at the centre and with on the ground knowledge and experience brought by those locally elected Members.

**4.1 Elected Members of Copeland Local Committee have an integral role in supporting their communities and ensuring the best possible outcomes. In recognition of their achievements, Members have offered the following contributions to demonstrate the variety of work they have undertaken in their respective divisions.**

**4.2 *Councillor Martin Steven Barbour - Howgate***

In December 2020, Walkmill Community Woodland at Moresby was subject to a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and responsibility for managing and developing the site, under a 99-year lease transferred to Moresby Parish Council.

The Parish Council alongside partners Walkmill Community Activity Group and West Cumbria Rivers Trust worked together to manage and build on the

success of the site. The whole site can be accessed by the public and all of the footpaths are protected for use by the public.

Environment funding of £11,300 was awarded in 2021 to enable West Cumbria Rivers Trust to continue to hold green gyms on the site and set up wildflower areas. Another application from West Cumbria Rivers Trust to the Environment Fund for £9,870 is currently being processed. This funding will enable them to set up their own nursery to grow trees and wildflowers along with footpath improvements.

Cllr Barbour said” It was an unexpected shock to me and a significant number of residents from both within and out with the Howgate community to learn that it had been agreed back in 2017 to dispose of the Walkmill Community Woodland.

The decision to market the site in 2019 created concern regarding the future of and public accessibility to the extensive area of land. A core group of concerned individuals were prepared to motivate and dedicate themselves in identifying and pursuing options to ensure the area remained accessible for public recreation.

It was a privilege for me to be able to facilitate the option of the resulting Community Asset Transfer of the extensive area of land to the custodianship of the Walkmill Community Woodland Activity Group, which I declare only became a possibility due to the sheer hard work and dogged determination of those founder, hardworking members of Walkmill Community Action Group with the professional support from the whole team of Copeland local area officers and local committee who have continued their support to enable WCWAG and their associates to further develop the area and activities available via allocation of further grants as stated.”

#### 4.3 **Councillor Michael (Mike) Hawkins - Mirehouse**

Beck Bottom Community Garden, Hensingham is run by a small group of local volunteers from all age ranges and backgrounds who share a passion for gardening and take great pride in the upkeep of the area.

They have helped transform a derelict area of former parkland into a cared for and attractive green space accessible to all. They aim to maintain and enhance Beck Bottom for the local community while promoting horticultural education and physical and mental health through gardening.

The group were initially awarded £10,000 in July 2021 to start the project with a further £10,000 being awarded in July 2022 to continue with the improvements. They have recently been awarded £5,000 in February 2023 to install a garden store with a living roof.

Cllr Hawkins said “the project has really grown and is beneficial to people’s mental health with Social Prescribers now referring into the project. It’s fabulous to see people working outdoors together on Saturday mornings, enjoying a chat whilst gardening”.

#### **4.4 Councillor Keith Haigh Hitchen (Chair) - Millom Without**

Members of the Copeland Local Committee have played an important role working with a variety of partners, acting as Champions, Members of Cabinet or on boards of other organisations such as Copeland Community Foundation, they have been able to influence decisions involving not only Copeland communities but countywide too.

As the Dementia Champion, Cllr Hitchen has been fundamental in influencing training and support for Dementia Care over many years, facilitating several projects with grant funding from Copeland Local Committee. Age UK recently recruited a new worker who will manage the remaining Dementia Enabling Fund of £8,000 allocated by Copeland Members, to assist in activities for those living with Dementia and their carers going forward for the future.

The modernisation of the building for the Millom Community Hub has been a major investment for both Cumbria County Council and Sellafield Ltd with its official opening in November 2022 after several years in development.

Cllr Hitchen proudly announced, "This has brought together a number of partners, beneficial for the long term working of services in Millom in a modern, bright, fit for purpose building". He added "This will be a one stop facility for the future which is up and running for the Cumberland Authority".

The Contain Outbreak Mitigation Fund (COMF) Outdoor Spaces was utilised to provide a safe footpath along the highway to Silecroft providing safe access from the village to the beach with an investment of £212K in 2021-2022. Cllr Hitchen has been delighted with this work along with the Environment Funding which has created improved access and pathway upgrades.

"This has been an overwhelming success from North to South of Copeland, supporting a range of communities including rural areas, with partnership working and local residents' enthusiasm"

#### **4.5 Councillor Arthur Lamb - Cleator Moor East and Frizington**

The Members of Local Committee were extremely saddened to hear of the loss of their colleague and friend in January. On his behalf, Officers would like to acknowledge the care and commitment that Councillor Lamb gave to his appointment on the Copeland Children and Young People's Partnership. Over the course of this term, the Partnership awarded funding to a number of significant projects that offered positive opportunities to children and young people, which Councillor Lamb was happy to support.

The Partnership supported continued funding of the PhunkyFoods programme, totalling £32,340. PhunkyFoods has now been working in Copeland primary schools since 2017 and continue to make an impact on the healthy lifestyle choices of local children.

More recently, the Partnership supported the introduction of Youth Health Champions training to secondary schools with a grant of £12,000. By the end of the academic year, 80 Youth Health Champions will be trained to run peer to peer health campaigns, gaining an extra qualification in Health Improvement.

Councillor Lamb also supported the Partnership to seek out projects that met local need. Following a programme of youth consultation by the University of Cumbria, a number of projects were identified that met the requests of young people. This included a grant of £12,000 for a Copeland Creative programme, developing skills and confidence in arts and culture for 16 – 24 year olds, culminating in a youth led festival. £7,000 was awarded for creating media pieces that showcase the various activities and opportunities available to young people in Copeland, and £3,800 enabled Moore Arts Millom to run a film club.

Other projects that Councillor Lamb was keen to fund include an Art Gym in Cleator Moor, renovation funding for Frizington Youth Centre and new equipment for Phoenix Youth Project.

It was a pleasure to work with Cllr Lamb in support of our communities, and our condolences remain with his family and friends.

#### **4.6 Councillor Frank Irving Morgan - Cleator Moor West**

Councillor Morgan says “I feel that one of the most impactful things which has been achieved for the Copeland area through Local Committee support has been the establishment of Fare Share food pantries and collection points around the area. It is now accessed and delivered to communities by a number of different organisations and is helping many individuals and families who are facing financial hardship, especially now with the impacts of the rising cost of living being felt by all”.

Councillor Morgan added “I am pleased that Phoenix Enterprise Centre have become one of the Fair Share distribution organisations and as well as delivering support to the community in this way, Phoenix Enterprise Centre has also benefitted from Local Committee funds to continue delivering a wide range of support, including digital skills and unemployment support and advice. I am proud that Cleator Moor has such a professional organisation in the town who are always there to help those who are most in need in Cleator Moor and the surrounding areas.

Councillor Morgan praised the works undertaken at Longlands saying “the work done to ensure that the lake will remain accessible to the public in the future is a huge benefit to the community. Having the assurance that this green space will remain accessible to all in the future has left a very positive and long-term legacy which benefits many people who utilise and enjoy the space. I have enjoyed seeing many improvements in the area happen due to Local Committee funds at different times, including the improvements to the seating areas and I am very pleased that legal rights are in place for the anglers club to continue fishing there and the right for the public to access the area will allow the lake to stay in a state of perpetuity, leaving a positive legacy for future generations of access to a place that gives people who go there a strong sense of wellbeing, through accessing nature”.

#### **4.7 Councillor Graham Robert Phillip Melville Roberts - Bransty**

The eight libraires across Copeland continue to be a valuable service to the community, ensuring they are accessible to all and providing a range of services, support and information.

Councillor Roberts says “I have played an active part in the Task and Finish groups to address improvements in the libraries within Copeland and I am encouraged to see that many of the agreed actions from the group have been addressed and implemented. I feel very positive about the wide range of services now available from Copeland libraries to meet the needs of the community. Opening hours have now been reviewed, so all libraries are open at lunch times and nobody is inconvenienced. Public uptake of talking books via the Borrow Box service has increased significantly and the library have invested in many more talking books, which has made the service more useful to those who have visual impairments. Our libraries are being utilised much more frequently by community groups and the ‘English Café’ which is held weekly is very well attended by those whose first language is not English and wish to practice their English Language skills”.

Councillor Roberts added “the response to the concerns raised around the traffic congestion and road layout issues at the bottom of Bransty Row were listened to, fully understood and addressed by the right people. This has not only vastly improved traffic flow in the area and the congestion issues, but has made the area look much more presentable and it makes a much better first impression of Whitehaven when people drive into the town from that direction”.

#### **4.8 Councillor David Edward Southward - Egremont**

As Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property a highlight for Cllr Southward was the development of the new Campus at Whitehaven which required a £30 million investment to fund. Investment came from a range of partners including the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Sellafield Ltd, Copeland Borough Council, Copeland Community Fund and Cumbria County Council.

The Campus included state of the art facilities for St Benedicts Catholic High School and Mayfield Special School and brought them together on the St Benedicts site replacing the buildings, radically improving the teaching, and learning environment and creating potential for boosting pupils’ aspirations and attainment.

The Campus opened in January 2019 and aimed to improve the health and well-being of the whole community as well as education and included community accessible, sports provision on the site.

Overall the project was about investing in the future of West Cumbria, ensuring that there is knowledge, skills and good health in the community to get the most from the opportunities presented by the anticipated growth of the nuclear and renewables industry.

Cllr Southward said, “It was a remarkable project with the incredible potential to transform the education of young people in Whitehaven and improve the health and well-being of the whole community.”

#### 4.9 **Councillor Paul Turner - Gosforth**

The Shackles Off Youth Project is an organisation based in Seascale which offers youth provision and support to the young people within the Mid Copeland area and more recently, with the funding from Copeland Area Local Committee, in South Copeland.

In March 2021 a grant was awarded for £17,178 which enabled them to begin a pilot project in Millom with a specialist Youth Worker. Cllr Turner said, "This has led to some fantastic work by this organisation who manage the difficult challenges faced by some children, assisting them to grow in confidence and improve their opportunities for the future".

After a real team effort, Cllr Turner working with the Schools Service and School Transport, have established that families living in and around the villages of Eskdale, Gosforth and Seascale will benefit from having dual catchment areas for secondary schools in both Egremont and Millom. "This will have a big impact on the financial outlay for these families in school transport costs from 2023".

In Seascale, approval for plans for a Traffic Light Scheme has received "an agreement in principle" which will allow safe passage on the narrow highway as it passes under the Railway Arch. Cllr Turner said, "This has been granted after 3 years of persistent work with Highways and Traffic Management teams and will address the conflict between pedestrian and vehicles on the highway and improve safety for everyone".

#### 4.10 **Councillor Chris Whiteside - Egremont North and St Bees**

Cllr Whiteside has been involved in the A595 liaison group and Copeland Highways Working group to address ongoing traffic issues in the area.

In 2021 road safety measures were implemented in St Bees through funding of £45,000 from the environment fund with a contribution of £5,000 from the Parish Council. A section of footpath was extended leading from Outrigg to St Bees village school, this improved safety for pedestrians and the narrowing of the road acted as a natural form of traffic calming.

The Adams Recreation Ground Trust received environment funding of £19,350 in February 2023. This was used to improve pathways and install benches and interpretation boards. Verge planting was also undertaken through the planting for pollinators scheme operated by Cumbria Wildlife Trust. They also received £3,600 general provision funding towards purchasing outdoor gym equipment for the area to encourage people of all ages to maintain health and fitness.

The achievement Councillor Whiteside is most proud of during his time as a Copeland County Councillor is the retention of consultant-led maternity services at West Cumberland Hospital. Both he and all the other members of Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee, worked on a cross party basis with NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, staff and the community, to emphasise the need for this to continue. This led to Dr Bill Kirkup's Independent Review Group recommending the retention of consultant-led

maternity services in West Cumbria, which was agreed, protecting the future of mothers and babies in West Cumbria.

Councillor Whiteside said, “From Mirehouse to Moor Row and from Bigrigg to Saint Bees we have seen efforts to improve roads and road safety in the division. In relation to maternity services, every family in Copeland will benefit from a better future because we have successfully campaigned to secure consultant led maternity provision at West Cumberland Hospital.”

#### **4.11 Councillor Emma Louise Williamson - Kells and Sandwith**

Councillor Emma Williamson played an integral role in the development of the ‘Positive Role Models’ programme which was funded through Local Committee grants. The support programme which was led by Cumbria Youth Alliance was designed to engage with young people aged between 13 and 16 years of age with the purpose of engaging young people, to build positive relationships, support their personal and social development, to raise their aspirations and to help build resilience.

Councillor Williamson says “The programme has demonstrated that positive role model support can have a positive impact on the outcomes and life chances for young people”.

She added “I am committed to ensuring that organisations have the capacity to support the most vulnerable members of our communities particularly extending funding through Covid-19 which included linking local organisations to the Community Development team to gain support with funding applications and engaging with those in need to ensure they knew how to access the support available. This has resulted in a positive legacy of better networks within communities, which are now able to meet other growing needs – such as creating warm hubs to help people with the cost of living”.

#### **4.12 Councillor Doug Wilson (Vice Chair) - Millom**

The Copeland Local Committee, Environment Fund grant funding has been an investment which has had a significant impact for the Millom community and the surrounding area. It has allowed delivery of pathway improvements where there has been a real need. Cllr Wilson remarked, “With relatively small sums of money targeted at certain areas, this has ensured that projects have been completed and made significant improvements to footpath accessibility beneficial to the whole community”.

Millom Town Council were awarded Environment Fund grants £37,000 to carry out surface improvements to Church Walk, a popular short cut in town. This resurfacing work now provides safe, easy access for both pedestrian users and cyclists.

Other pathway projects in Millom and in the surrounding areas of Haverigg, include Sandham Lane, Poolside and Middle Cut which included local partnership working with Ghyll Scaur Quarry Group and financial investment. This together with Copeland Local Committee’s contribution of an additional £121,000 from the Environment fund, enabled Cumbria County Council

Highways Department to deliver these much appreciated footpath improvements.

#### **4.13 Councillor Andrew William Wonnacott - Hillcrest and Hensingham**

The Gables Residential Care Home opened in 2019 replacing four care homes across Copeland. Cumbria County Council invested £6 million in the project to deliver a state of the art residence.

Councillor Wonnacott stated “I was pleased to see the land, formerly the Sekers site, brought back in to use to create a modern 60 bedded residential home for older adults. It provides a wonderful home for residents and includes a spacious central hub, with café area, hairdressing salon, and on-site shop. This modern high spec facility offers en-suite bedrooms and lounges that have their own access to a secure garden and patio areas. Copeland local committee funded a giant touch screen activity tablet that residents can use for recreation. This is a real asset for residents of The Gables providing access to a variety of stimulating and engaging content, from accessing the internet, to games, puzzles and other activities they can enjoy in a group, or on their own. Introducing care homes to technology such as this can help residents to connect with their family and friends, helping them to become more interactive and maintain a sense of connection with the wider world. The Gables is a fantastic facility for the community”.

#### **Response to Major Incidents**

- 4.14 Copeland Local Committee has been committed to supporting the team in its direct response to Covid from 2020 -2022 and the current Cost of Living Crisis. In direct response to Covid, the team were involved in establishing the ‘West Coast Welfare Hub’ where team members supported and liaised with formal and informal third sector organisations to provide direct support to vulnerable households and organisations for a period of 10 weeks.
- 4.15 Members of Local Committee have been given additional funding over 3 years to support the most vulnerable in our communities and were able to distribute funds such as the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Cost of Living Grants demonstrated below:

#### **Cost of Living Reserve**

- 4.16 The allocation of funds to Copeland was £45,700. This comprised of £18,400 for community support and £27,300 for food to help with the challenges some families are facing with the cost of living increases.

The team has worked with partner organisations to distribute the funding which includes:

- Financial support to food pantries to purchase additional food and essential items
- Financial support to verified warm spot venues to provide food and refreshments

- Funding to third sector and community organisations for the purchase of vouchers to enable them to support those in financial crisis
- Purchase of items such as hot water bottles and blankets to be distributed via warm spot locations and by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

## **COMF**

- 4.17 This funding was provided to local authorities to support the ongoing public health and outbreak management costs associated with tackling COVID-19. The team promoted the three elements of the fund, working with partners and community groups to award grants.
- 4.18 In 2021-22, allocations were made to Copeland Local Committee as set out:
- £100,000 Hardship
  - £200,000 Environmental Infrastructure and Improvements
  - £50,000 Events and activities
- 4.19 In relation to the Hardship element, funding was allocated to successful applicants. These included Phoenix Enterprise Centre, Millom Network Centre, CADAS, Together We and Copeland Citizens Advice.
- 4.20 The environmental infrastructure and improvements element of the fund encouraged residents to enjoy their local area and attract new visitors away from the popular tourist areas and encourage them to try something outside of their usual experiences. Funds were allocated to build a footpath from Silecroft allowing access the beach and ensuring a safe route for people to walk along the highway.
- 4.21 The events and activities element of the fund sponsored events and activities to encourage participation from the local community and attract visitors away from the usual honeypot areas. Officers worked with partners and organisations to provide funding towards a range of events and initiatives.

## **Commemorative Benches**

- 4.22 In recognition of the work done by Cumbria County Council's Copeland Local Committee, commemorative benches will be sited in Whitehaven, Egremont, Cleator Moor, Millom and St Bees.
- 4.23 A plaque will be included on each bench with an inscription:

*Presented by Elected Members of Cumbria County Council's Local Committee for Copeland 31 March 2023*

## 5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 The report is to note only so there are no options to consider.

## 6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications from the recommendation in this report.

## 7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct legal implications in Members noting their positive contributions to Copeland over recent years.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 This report sets out some of the activities and projects that the Elected Members of Copeland Local Committee have developed, overseen, supported and funded in this current term. It does not by any means cover all the activities but at this last meeting of Copeland Local Committee, it seemed fitting to give Elected Members the opportunity to document, what for them have been highlights.

**Simon Higgins**

**Assistant Director – Customer and Community Services**

*March 2023*

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## APPENDICES

### ***Local Committees Constitution – Appendix 1***

Electoral Division(s): All

Executive Decision

	No
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Key Decision

	No*
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If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

		N/A*
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Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

	No*
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If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

		N/A*
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Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?  
If so, give details below.

	No*
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Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken? 

		N/A*
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Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken? 

		N/A*
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***N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.***

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**  
***[including Local Committees]***

***No previous relevant decisions.***

**CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

***Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.***

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

***No background papers.***

**REPORT AUTHOR**

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