

# Peer Challenge Position Statement





# An Opportunity

**Cumbria County Council has an  
ambitious vision to be**

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

**We are focused on improving outcomes for everybody in Cumbria and recognise that to do this we need to work in new ways, and to build on the Council's strong track record of effective partnership working.**

This Corporate Peer Challenge is a welcome and timely opportunity to ask for the views of peers on the progress we are making towards our vision. In particular, it will be useful to build up a picture of whether we have the focus and the capacity in the right places to deliver on our vision, and how the refreshed approach to area working is being embedded across the organisation and with partners.

Taking the learning and experience from peers from across the country and feeding this into our future planning will be a valuable part of moving forward with our plans over the coming months.

We have recognised that the Council can't deliver its ambitions for Cumbria in isolation. Our role has to change as communities needs change. New technology and communication channels, mean that individuals, families and communities can access information, support and resources when they need it.

The future role of the Council is about creating the conditions for change, in enabling and facilitating, and working with communities to improve outcomes – not doing to communities – whilst making sure we are here when people do need us to deliver a solution. This requires new approaches, more collaboration, an outward focus, and an ongoing conversation with our residents.

We are concentrating on what works well in communities and building on that, whilst being realistic about the challenging, and uncertain, environment in which we and our partners are working. We have recognised that we need to do more to prevent demand for services from rising further, to supporting people earlier so that they don't become more vulnerable, to support our communities to be more resilient when extreme weather and other events happen, and to play a major role in achieving inclusive economic growth in Cumbria.

We have articulated clearly in our Council Plan 2018-2022, what we want to achieve and the approaches to delivery. We look forward to exploring these with you during the challenge.



**Councillor  
Stewart Young**  
*Leader of Cumbria  
County Council*

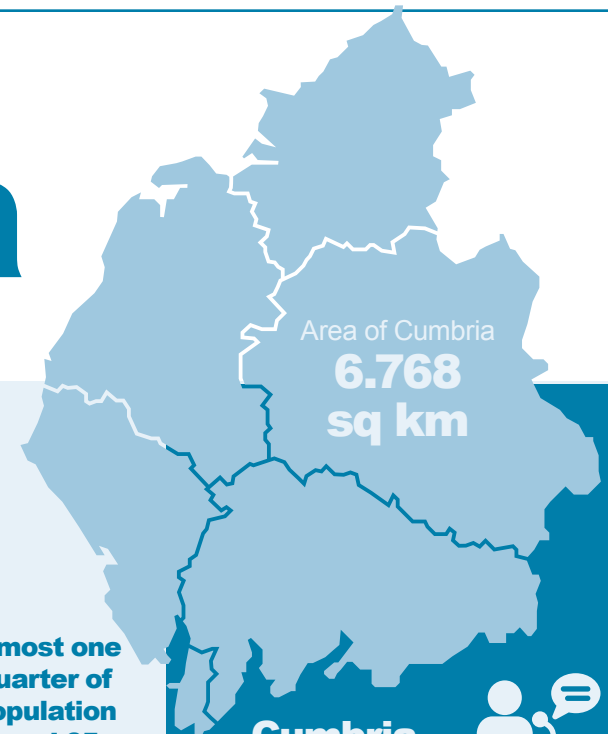


**Peter Thornton**  
*Deputy Leader of Cumbria  
County Council*

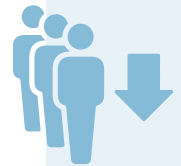


**Katherine Fairclough**  
*Chief Executive of Cumbria  
County Council*

# This is Cumbria

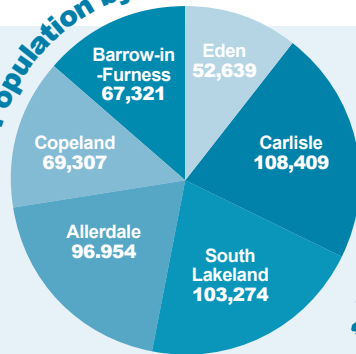


## Overview



Cumbria is much **less densely populated** than the national average

### Population by district

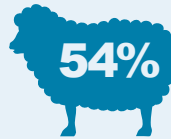


**Total Population**  
**498,400**

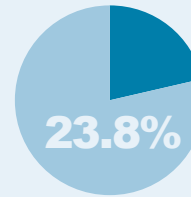


### 2 National Parks and 3 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Between them covering 56% of Cumbria. Lake District designated as a World Heritage Site



**54%** of Cumbria's population live in **rural communities**



**Almost one quarter of population aged 65 and over**



**Median household income in Cumbria is £28,052**, compared to £31,446 in the UK



**79.3% of Cumbrians are employed**, compared to 75% in the UK

Maintains **4,900 miles** of carriageway – 4th largest in UK

### Second largest county in England



**31.8%** of Cumbrians have **skills at Level 4 and above**, compared to 39.2% in the UK

**Black and Ethnic Minority Population 3.5%**



**45%** of Cumbrians in very good health

## Cumbria County Council



**Established 1974**  
**84 Councillors**  
**Net revenue budget for 2019/20 is £378.755 million**  
**6436 council-based employees**

## Health & wellbeing

Health cost of inactivity to Cumbria is

**£9,100,000**  
every year

**25.3%** of people (16+) in Cumbria are **inactive** compared to 25.1% in England

**105,300** people

Average life expectancy

**79.2 years**

**83 years**

Number of unpaid carers

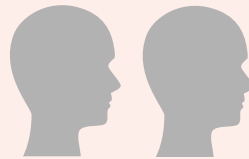
**56,000**

Since 2012, smoking prevalence in adults in Cumbria has reduced by around

**23,000 people**



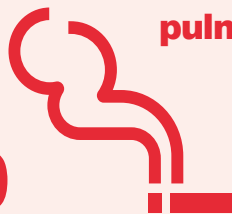
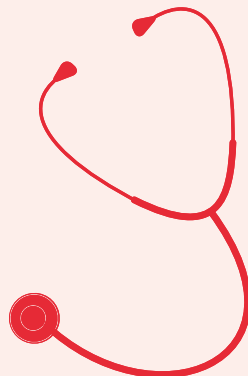
**10,035**  
safe and well visits carried out in 2018/19



**1 in 4**  
will experience mental health problem this year

Some of the biggest causes of death in Cumbria

**Cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**



## Environment

**First Dark Sky Discovery site**  
in the NW to be accredited

**56% of Cumbria**  
is National Park and areas of outstanding national beauty



**47.3m visitors**  
generating **£2.9bn** for the economy

**CO2** emissions  
7.8 Kt per capita v 5.4 nationally



## Transport

**57.8% in employment travelling by car** v 54.6% England & Wales

**21.4% households without access to car** v 25.8% nationally



## Communities & digital

**Over 53,000 volunteers** in Cumbria via community and charitable sector



**Challenges with internet and speed** compared to other parts of the country



## Population, household & settlements

**28,060** estimated number of **fuel poor households**



Over the next four years (2017-2021) Cumbria's **65+ population** to **increase by 6,700 persons**

While the county's **working age population** is projected to **decrease by 7,700 persons**



**£188,203** average house price Cumbria, 2018



**23.5%** Almost one quarter of population aged **65 and over**

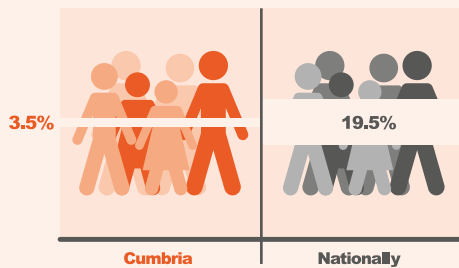


Average household **income** in Cumbria in 2018 was **£34,852**



**16.5%** aged **0-15**

### Percentage of population from BME background

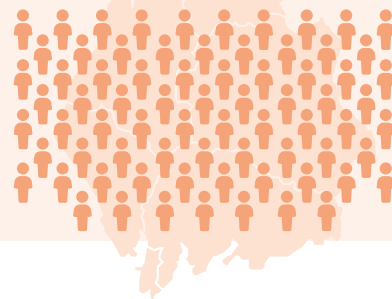


**222,042** households in Cumbria

Average 2.3 persons per household. (Census 2011)

**74 persons per sq km**

2nd lowest in England



## Who's home?

**32.3%** Single person

**10.1%** One family aged 65+

**35.0%** One family married / same sex partnership couple

**9.1%** One family cohabiting couple

**8.9%** One family lone parent

**1.5%** with dependent children

**0.1%** all full-time students

**0.4%** all aged 65+

**2.6%** other

## Labour market & economy



Cumbria has an **ageing workforce** and declining working age population presenting a challenging labour supply issue



**59.7%** working age population  
National 62.8%

**8.4%** working age population on **out of work benefits**  
National 8.5%



**23,585** enterprises

89.4% of which are micro businesses (0-9 employees)





## Deprivation

There are **high levels of poverty** and deprivation spread across the county and in particular in the urban areas of **Barrow and West Cumbria**



**29 communities**

(accounting for 9.03%)

that rank within the 10% most deprived of areas in England



**11,800 Children**

(12.7%) (aged 0-19 years) are living in poverty, this compares to 16.6% nationally



**1 in 3 households** in some areas of Cumbria have a household income of less than **£10,000 per year**

**1 in 5 of Cumbria's most deprived communities are rural**; although deprivation is greater in Cumbria's urban areas there are pockets of significant deprivation in some of the most rural communities

**1 in 3 children** are claiming a **free school meal** in some areas



## Crime & disorder



**9,306**

**violence against the person crimes in 2017-18**, a rate of 18.7 per 1,000 population, lower than the England & Wales rate of 23.8 per 1,000. One quarter of these crimes in Cumbria involved alcohol (25.9%; 2,410)

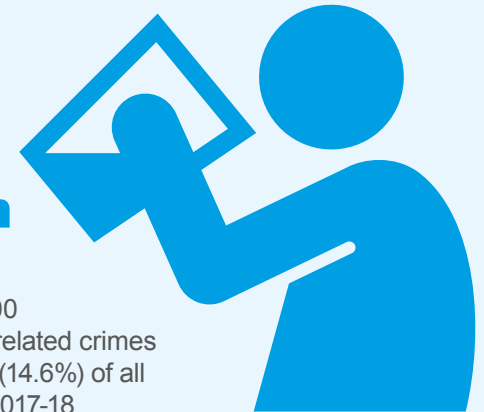
**1,337 sexual offences in 2017-18**, a rate of 2.7 per 1,000 population, slightly higher than the England & Wales rate of 2.6 per 1,000. Alcohol-related sexual offences accounted for 13.5% of these (180 crimes)



**Cumbria is a relatively safe place in which to live, work and visit.** In many areas, levels of crime and community safety issues are better than that experienced nationally and / or the North West region

**4,171 alcohol related crimes in 2017-18**

a rate of 8.4 per 1,000 population. Alcohol-related crimes accounted for 1 in 7 (14.6%) of all recorded crimes in 2017-18



**11 emergency calls per day** CFRS attended on average in 2017/18



**7,250 instances of domestic abuse** in 2017-18, a rate of 14.5 per 1,000 population

**321 people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI)** on Cumbria's roads in 2017, a rate of 0.6 per 1,000 population which is higher than the England rate of 0.4 per 1,000





## Understanding local place and priority setting

**We have a good understanding of Cumbria's diverse communities which inform a clear set of aspirations set out in the Council Plan. We have a comprehensive evidence base and local intelligence which is used to inform priorities and decision-making. Local Members have a strong voice in identifying priorities and in promoting solutions in their area, and we engage with residents in a wide range of ways. Partnership working is critical to developing our understanding of place, and we jointly deliver on shared priorities with partners. We are continuously seeking ways to enrich our understanding.**

Cumbria is a large and varied area with unique landscapes, a tradition of strong communities, and an economy with outstanding opportunities and some particular challenges. The understanding we have of local communities is good and is growing all the time. This recognition of the strengths of communities, families and individuals is the starting point for our ongoing conversation with residents and customers. The Council's role is changing and needs to continue to evolve so that we enable communities to achieve better outcomes.

Over the last decade and a half, communities have experienced the devastating impacts of a number of major weather events, including major flooding in 2005 and 2009, Storm Desmond and the Beast from the East. In supporting communities in their recovery, the relationship between those communities and the Council has grown. We recognise this and are using this learning to embed new ways of working and develop our relationships to support communities to thrive in the future.



## Listening to our communities

The Council has a strong tradition of area working with 6 well-established Local Committees made up of all Cumbria County Council Elected Members representing each local area. We have strengthened the 6 Local Committees to ensure they are well placed to shape services in the local area.

We engage with residents in a wide range of ways. Local Members know their communities well and champion their aspirations. They utilise connections in their localities and our area working approach includes a focus on supporting Members in this role to maximise their impact as community leaders.

Our staff work every day with residents in their local communities and bring a great deal of insight about local strengths and challenges. Intensive engagement is undertaken in communities to inform and

consult them on work in their area, e.g. surveys, drop-ins in community venues, use of story boards, facilitating community meetings, and online, alongside more formal consultation channels. We keep in contact with those we have engaged with so that we can keep them informed throughout the process and provide feedback.

We are increasingly placing the voice of communities at the centre of what we do and are doing more co-production of solutions and services with communities. Starting with an open and honest dialogue with communities and partners about the issues and challenges which need addressed in each community, the Council is cutting across old silo-working through multi-disciplinary and effective partnership working to design person and family-centred support.

We are developing and delivering models based on community

and family hub models – both physical and virtual – to bring together professionals with communities and families to identify issues and joint solutions. We are putting in place a family hub model to join up support for 0 – 19 year olds which in the past has been partially fragmented. This will be an holistic approach for children, young people and families with a focus on wellbeing. We will support families to build resilience and independence and, when needs emerge, will support them to achieve positive outcomes. This builds on existing examples of nationally recognised excellent practice on engagement leading to joined up solutions, e.g. joined up work to address community safety issues in parts of Barrow.



**We are increasingly placing the voice of communities at the centre of what we do**



## Case Study



## Strength based work with communities

**The Council's community development professionals are working in their areas to embed strength-based approaches to support communities build resilience and resolve issues and challenges. This starts with identifying what works well and what physical and social assets already exist in the community that can be used.**

The Healthy Towns initiative started slowly and has developed to a wide range of activities focused on the determinants of public health and maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of people in the area.

Living Well events held in community settings, e.g. in libraries, or the marketplace, have been successful

in attracting people who don't see themselves as unhealthy and needing to see the doctor. Providing access to medical screening in the places they go every day in an informal setting pays dividends. To date nearly 250 people have been referred for blood pressure checks following screening at one of these community-based events – reducing the risk of needing emergency or more intensive medical services in the future.

Ulverston is now a Healthy Town expanding activity around health and wellbeing issues. There are now more than 25 groups involved focusing on a range of issues including poverty, single use plastics, dementia, and cycling. A successful social enterprise has been established providing bike repair services.

This model has been led by local communities and local councillors as community leaders and is supported by a range of professional expertise from the Council and partners.

A healthy hub model can be used anywhere and the Council is supporting communities to develop this approach where they want it and in a way that meets the needs of each specific community.





Local residents and businesses are also central to shaping Council strategies and policies through extensive consultation and engagement in key policies, and through early engagement of Scrutiny Members in policy development. Over the last year public drop-in sessions and public consultation in each area have been carried out to plan the future focus of Fire and Rescue Services in the county as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan process. Public workshop sessions were also held to identify priorities for health and wellbeing in the county resulting in the county's new joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The voice of the child is at the centre of Council work to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cumbria. Ofsted has recognised the significant improvements achieved by the Council over the last 5 years in improving services for children and young people and has highlighted the quality of engagement

in policy and service development, and the role of Members, including Scrutiny Members, in making this progress.

We are working hard to ensure this intelligence and insight, alongside comprehensive data sets and analytics, inform not only Council priorities but shared priorities with partners.

Work with partners is critical to continuing to evolve our understanding of Cumbria's communities. The Council has good relationships with the local community and voluntary sector and we are working with them to envisage what this relationship needs to look like in the future to support communities to thrive.

## Council Plan

The Council Plan sets out clearly the outcomes we want to achieve for Cumbria, and the ways of working we will adopt to do this.



**Work with partners is critical to continuing to evolve our understanding of Cumbria's communities.**



# Council Plan outcomes and ways of working

The Council Plan 2018 – 2022 was adopted by the Full Council in February 2018 after engagement across the organisation, with partners and public consultation. This was followed by extensive communications and engagement activity to raise awareness internally and externally.

The development of this new Council Plan marked a fresh approach with a very clear focus on long-term outcomes, and articulating a set of new ways of working as enablers to the delivery of outcomes.

People in Cumbria are healthy and safe

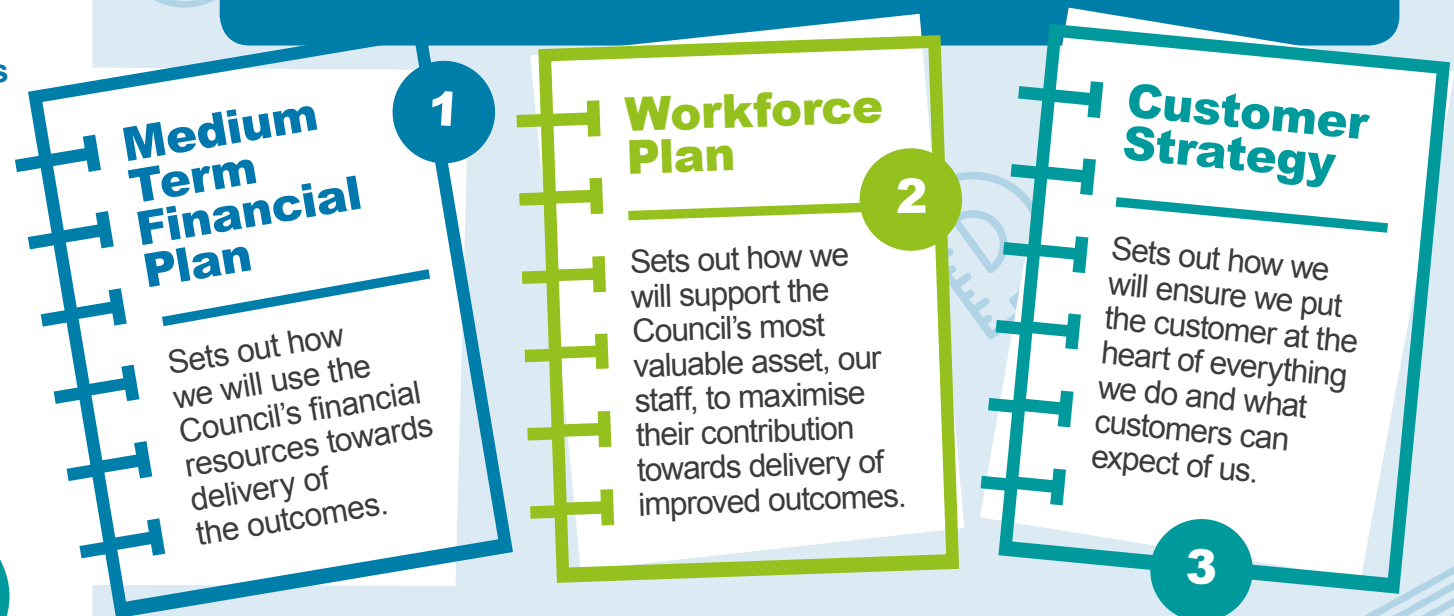
The economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone

Places in Cumbria are well-connected and thriving

## Ways of Working

The Council Plan Delivery Plan describes what the Council will do each year towards achieving each of the 3 outcomes, and the measures we will use to assess what progress we are making.

The Council Plan is supported by a small number of core strategies that describe in more detail what the Council will do to make sure that we have the right things in place to achieve our aspirations. These include:



These are critical to ensuring the Council is in a good position to deliver improved outcomes through Council and shared strategies.



Shared strategies and joint delivery is absolutely essential to the Council's vision, building on good relationships and refreshing them so that they are fit for the future. Both the county's joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Council's Public Health Strategy have been refreshed over the last 12 months, and both demonstrate the progress achieved in identifying shared priorities and joint delivery plans with health sector partners, with district councils and other partners. The shared commitment to improve outcomes is based on effective relationships, a shared evidence base, and a place-based approach to engagement.

The new Cumbria Local Industrial Strategy also further strengthens partnership working around inclusive economic growth. The Council has always made a strong contribution to the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – acting as accountable body, providing administrative, information and intelligence support, and leading on infrastructure investment plans. This builds on the long history of joint working at area level as part of the Local Plan process.

Our work with district councils is critical to delivery of spatial plans for each area, and ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of new development, through negotiated planning obligation processes including section 106 agreements and a Community Infrastructure Levy. The approach to infrastructure investment in the county has made significant steps forward over the last 1 to 2 years, as the Council has led the discussion to agree a single set of strategic infrastructure priorities for the county requiring external investment with LEP partners and local MPs.

This provides the opportunity for a strengthened shared approach to lobbying and securing investment at a regional and national level – through the Council's membership of Transport for the North, and stronger relationships at national level. This approach has achieved successes already with significant investments secured for priority infrastructure projects.

## Future Ambitions

- Continue to develop strength-based support that is focused on the needs of individuals, communities and families
- Use the insight and intelligence we have about communities better to inform action
- Continue to expand the ways in which we engage with communities and increase community involvement in the design and delivery of solutions







# Leadership of Place

Cumbria is a large county with a complex landscape of public services and organisations, and we recognise that collaborative leadership is the only way to achieve the improved outcomes we aspire to. The Council's role is evolving and we are committed to creating the conditions to effect change. We are building on traditionally strong relationships with partners to provide effective leadership of place at county and community level, and increasingly looking outwards to lobby for our communities for the resources and support they need to secure the local changes they want to see.



**Ofsted**

**88.5% of schools  
rated 'good' or  
'outstanding'  
by Ofsted at  
December 2018**

## Leadership in collaboration

In Cumbria we are achieving despite the challenges. Alongside the financial constraints on public services over the last decade, we have a large and unique landscape. Serving the county's half a million residents there is 1 county council, 6 district councils, 2 national park authorities, 6 NHS organisations, over 250 town and parish councils over the second largest county in England. We recognise that leading in collaboration with communities and with partner organisations is the only way to achieve more.

We are clear that the Council's role is, now and in the future, to create the conditions to effect change – using a strengths based approach so that the conversations we have with our residents and partners start with building on what is already there and what works well, and what we can do to help. In this context leadership means facilitating, enabling, and supporting – playing different roles in response to what residents are telling us they need. Our approach is based on effective and continuous community engagement, and led by Elected Members as a strong voice for their communities.

The Council makes significant contributions to key partnerships at strategic and local level, and leads where we can make a positive difference. We have a long tradition of partnership working. It is in our DNA and partners tell us they value this. We are now pushing ourselves to the next level to achieve the ambitions we've set out.

We provide leadership to Cumbria's Health and Wellbeing Board, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Children's Trust and Safer Cumbria – all providing countywide leadership to improving the safety, health and wellbeing of residents. Adopt Coast to Coast has also recently been launched in partnership with Durham County Council and Sunderland City Council to improve services for children and young people who need to be adopted.

Whilst the local authority role in education has changed significantly over the last decade or so, the Council continues to successfully enable educational improvement, supporting the Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders (CASL). Over the last 2 years, we have actively increased

the contribution we make to improving skills in Cumbria more widely, including leading work across the health and care system on workforce matters, aligning our community learning and skills offer to identified local and business needs and providing leadership to the forum of training and further education providers.





## Case Study



## Refugee Resettlement

**In 2017 Cumbria was approached by the Home Office to take refugees as part of the national Syrian Refugee Resettlement programme. Whilst statutory partners' experience of this type of resettlement work was limited and networks of bespoke support not yet developed, partners still committed to provide support and made a pledge to resettle 285 refugees by 2020.**

The Council agreed to lead the delivery of a multi – agency programme and by working together over 184 refugees have already been successfully resettled into communities across the county.

The Council has brought together the District Councils, Police, DWP, NHS and voluntary and community sector

partners to develop and deliver the resettlement programme.

The Council plays a co-ordinating role at a strategic level; and is also facilitating multi-agency locality based integration and support activity.

There has been a real focus over the past 2 years to develop relationships with the 5 volunteer led Refugee Action Groups and BAME networks in the county. Over time the understanding of respective roles of the action groups and statutory sector has developed; and increasingly the groups are offering support to families to complement the offer from public services. This is helping to build the network of support in the county.



The feedback from refugees about the approach to their resettlement has been incredibly positive; and is being used to inform the ongoing partnership programme of activity. We are starting to see refugees move into jobs, children flourish in schools, and even join the Council's own workforce on the apprenticeship scheme.

We are building new types of relationships with parish and town councils and with the vibrant local community and voluntary sector. We have begun to work more closely with parish and town councils to design and deliver services with early successes on highways services. The Council's ongoing conversation with the community and voluntary sector about working together in different ways to support communities is underway and is beginning to pay dividends.

## Leadership through crisis and recovery

Cumbria has experienced the devastating impacts of a number of extreme weather events over the last decade and a half and the Council has responded effectively to these emergencies with partners, working through the Local Resilience Forum, and has provided leadership to support the individuals, households and communities affected to recover. The recovery process from Storm Desmond in 2015 continues across the county. This includes the 982 schemes to repair the roads, bridges, rights of way, footpaths and embankments damaged by

the flooding through the Council's 4-year £120 million Infrastructure Recovery Programme. Over 800 of these schemes have been completed to date.

Engagement with local community-based flood groups has been key in supporting recovery and is vital to the significant work to reduce flood risk. We are building on this to support communities to become more resilient for the future. We are contributing to the work of the Cumbria Strategic Floods Partnership which is leading and supporting the delivery of approximately 250 projects to reduce the risk of flooding.



The recovery process from Storm Desmond in 2015 continues across the county.



## Looking outwards

To achieve our aspirations for Cumbria we recognise that we need more than ever to look beyond the county boundaries to secure the changes and resources needed to help communities in the county to thrive. The Council has responded to this with a significant effort over the last two years to making sure we engage with key stakeholders at local, regional and national level to deliver for Cumbria.

We've refocused our engagement with key stakeholders in Government and with our local MPs. We have agreed with local MPs a list of priority infrastructure improvements in the county and recently secured £102 million through the Housing Infrastructure Fund for a new Carlisle Southern Link Road.

We work through strategic partnerships and their key strategies and plans to be clear about Cumbria's priorities and their delivery, and what's needed at all levels to achieve shared ambitions – policy change, support and advice, or resources.

At a strategic level, the leaders of the 7 local authorities, the Lake District National

Park Authority, the Cumbria Association of Local Councils, the Cumbria Third Sector Network, Cumbria LEP, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and Health system partners make up the membership of the Cumbria Leadership Board which provides joined up leadership in the county. This is supported by the Cumbria Chief Executives Group which provides senior officer leadership and delivery at strategic level, plus a number of professional or technical groups working jointly on specific issues, e.g. local finance officers, LEP technical officer groups. These act as the 'engine rooms' of policy and delivery in the county and the Council has a long history of making significant contributions to these groups.

Cumbria's Health and Wellbeing Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council, has just published its new Health and Wellbeing Strategy setting out the direction

of travel for the whole health and wellbeing system and provides a framework for future decisions so that everyone in Cumbria will have improved health and wellbeing, and inequalities in levels of health and wellbeing across the county will be reduced.





We recognise that these ambitions cannot be delivered by any one organisation and will need the support of the county's 7 councils, the 2 Clinical Commissioning Groups, the NHS Trusts, the community and voluntary sector, the independent care sector, the private sector and, most importantly, the people of Cumbria.

This approach is the new partnership Public Health Strategy for Cumbria which has been developed jointly with key partners, including formal adoption by each of the 6 District Councils, and is aimed at improving population health by focusing on the wider

determinants of health and will be delivered jointly by partners working with communities.

The Council's leadership of the Children's Trust Board and the Board's Children and Young People's Plan also enables a range of partners to speak with one voice about the needs and aspirations of children and young people in Cumbria. This is supported by flexible and responsive delivery arrangements with partners to address issues as they emerge, e.g. needs-led learning disability boards.

The future ambitions for Cumbria's economic growth are being agreed in the county's new Local Industrial Strategy. Again, the Council is playing a key role alongside Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) partners in creating the conditions for inclusive growth. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal will be a major part of the delivery of the shared ambitions.



Cumbria will have improved health and wellbeing, and inequalities in levels of health and wellbeing across the county will be reduced.

## Case Study



## Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

**The Borderlands Partnership has secured a £345 million deal from the UK and Scottish Governments. The Deal is unique in the UK crossing the English and Scottish Border at the centre of the UK. Borderlands covers 10% of the UK's land mass and a population of over 1 million.**

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal will mean thousands of new job opportunities, millions of extra tourists, improved digital connectivity and investment in towns across the Borderlands area. The Deal will return a predicted £1.3 billion return on the Governments investment.

The Borderlands Partnership is a unique collaboration that brings together 5 local authorities – Carlisle City Council,

Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council.

The Deal is made up of 5 programmes:

- Digital
- Borderlands Energy Investment Company
- Destination Borderlands
- Quality of Place
- Business Infrastructure Programme

Carlisle Station Gateway & Citadels is one of 4 place-based projects within the Deal.





This renewed external focus is beginning to reap rewards for Cumbria.

The Council's voice within the sector is also being strengthened by promoting and sharing Cumbria's best practice and by working with bodies including the Local Government Association and County Councils Network on lobbying, support and funding opportunities.

## Future Ambitions



- Continue to embed strength-based approaches to work with communities at all levels – focusing on what we already have and what works well
- Redouble our efforts towards new relationships with the community and voluntary sector, town and parishes councils and collaborative working with communities to make sure we're well placed to support communities to thrive
- Work with partners to identify national and regional opportunities to secure the changes, support and resources needed to deliver better outcomes in Cumbria
- Promote and share what we do well in Cumbria



**£1.6m secured from DfT to test new highways technology, including 'plastic' roads. (January 2019)**





# Organisational Leadership and Governance

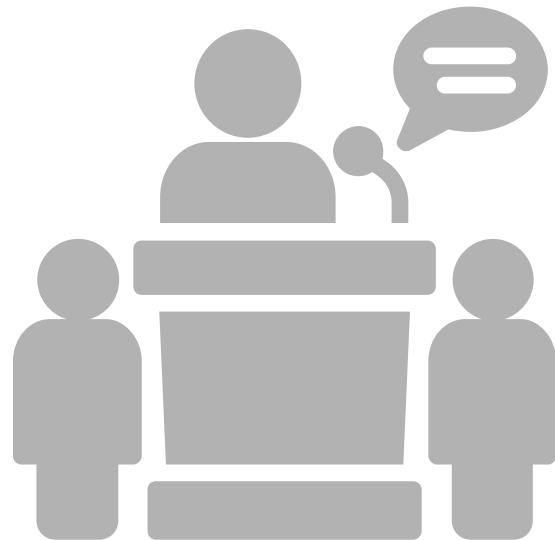
**Cumbria County Council set out an ambitious vision to improve outcomes for everyone in Cumbria in the new Council Plan in 2018, and the ways of working we are implementing to achieve that vision. Over the last year and a half we have put the building blocks in place to enable the organisation to make the changes we need to make, and we are already seeing positive progress.**

Cumbria County Council was established in 1974 and has 84 Councillors. 'All out' elections are held every 4 years. The last elections were held in 2017 resulting in the current Labour and Liberal Democrat partnership administration.

The Council operates a Cabinet model. The 10 members of Cabinet provide strategic leadership to policy and performance in their areas of responsibility.



The 10 members of Cabinet provide strategic leadership.



**Councillor Stewart Young**  
*Leader of Cumbria County Council*



**Councillor Patricia Bell**  
*Cabinet Member for Health and Care Services*



**Councillor Peter Thornton**  
*Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance*



**Councillor Deborah Earl**  
*Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Services*



**Councillor Anne Burns**  
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services*



**Councillor Keith Little**  
*Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport*



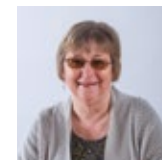
**Councillor Celia Tibble**  
*Cabinet Member for Environment*



**Councillor David Southward**  
*Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property*



**Councillor Janet Willis**  
*Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue*



**Councillor Sue Sanderson**  
*Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning*



Scrutiny arrangements are in place to promote the engagement of non-executive councillors in policy development and review. There are 4 Scrutiny Advisory Boards established:

- Scrutiny Management Board – which provides oversight and management of the Council's scrutiny process and takes an overview of use of resources, policy development and performance
- Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board – which provides scrutiny of the Council's powers and duties relating to adults
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board - which provides scrutiny of the Council's powers and duties relating to children and young people
- Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board – which provides scrutiny of the Council's powers and duties relating to safer, stronger and inclusive communities, planning, highways, the environment and economic regeneration

The Council also hosts the county's Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, a joint Health Scrutiny Committee with Lancashire, the Local Enterprise Partnership Scrutiny Board and the county's Police and Crime Panel.

Each of the Council's Scrutiny Boards play an important role in informing the development of the Council's policy and budget framework, reviewing and scrutinising decisions and performance, and making recommendations resulting from their work. Full Council receives a report on scrutiny activity at each meeting and the Scrutiny Boards produce a public report each year setting out the work they have done and the impact they have achieved. Scrutiny Members have undertaken a self-assessment over the last 6 months and are building on this by putting a plan in place to support the further development of the Scrutiny function to maximise the impact of Scrutiny work on improving outcomes.

## Leadership and Management

Relationships between Members and Officers are open, honest, mature and mutually respectful meaning that appropriate challenging conversations take place when they need to. Cabinet Members and the Council's Leadership Team collectively spend dedicated time together to focus on strategic policy, budget and performance issues.

Members and Officers demonstrate a commitment to investing capacity and resources into improvement activity, and to learning when things don't work so well. The Council has captured and acted on the learning from external challenge, inspection and audit findings. We have strengthened audit and assurance arrangements as a result.



**Senior leaders use regular external evaluation and challenge well to inform plans for improvement.**

*(Ofsted, January 2018)*



## Case Study



## Governance - An Enabler

**Building on experience and learning, in 2018 we began to review governance arrangements to ensure that they didn't act as a barrier but enabled and supported the focus of the Council on leadership of place, area working, and new ways of working.**

The Council's constitution has been reviewed and refreshed, and redesigned to make it more accessible for everyone and more streamlined. The Council's 6 Local Committees have been strengthened and their Terms of Reference reviewed to support area working approaches, making sure local Members have the right powers and resources.

We are implementing an Improving Governance project which now provides

managers and staff with a good understanding of governance processes, and streamlined provision of information advice and guidance enabling self-service.

The Council's Performance and Risk Management Framework has also been reviewed to ensure it is aligned with ambitions and ways of working for the future. We agreed a new Performance and Risk Management Framework in June 2018. This sets out an approach focused on timely use of performance and management information so that issues are identified early, effective assessment and mitigation of risk, and streamlined but more accessible reporting. This better aligns performance, risk and budget management across the organisation.

Transparency is important in the performance management process with quarterly reports being considered by Cabinet. Lead Cabinet Members regularly consider performance with Senior Officers monthly. Scrutiny Members also focus on performance on a quarterly basis through a dedicated Scrutiny Performance Working Group which considers the performance information considered by Cabinet and Cabinet's subsequent actions.

The Council is focusing on improving area-focused performance and risk management to effectively support Local Committees and area working.

We are pursuing opportunities to improve use of real-time information and analytics to enrich management decision-making.

## Investing in leadership

The Council is investing in current and future leadership and management.

## Leadership and management development programme

We have made a commitment to make sure the Council is a learning organisation. As part of this, we have put in place refreshed leadership and management programmes to provide the tools and training to support leaders and managers at all levels.

Designed to support organisational development and provide opportunities for personal growth and enable people to achieve their full potential, the programmes include a range of training, e-learning, and advice and guidance.

Some of the great new opportunities are the leadership and management qualifications at Masters, Degree and ILM levels 3 and 5, funded through our contribution to the Government's apprenticeship levy. There are 92 staff who have taken up these opportunities and are working towards to achieving these qualifications.

Other opportunities include 360° appraisals and feedback, and at individual and team level the MBTI psychometric, and the fun, interactive JIGSAW tool to help understand team dynamics. There is also support for team development activities and away days from the Council's Learning and Development team.

The Council recognised that informal learning and engagement is as important as formal, so we have also focused on ensuring there are regular opportunities for leaders and managers to spend time together to collectively consider issues and develop solutions collaboratively. This is key to delivering organisational change, embed new ways of working, and promote innovation and creativity.

Over the last 2 years we have established regular Leadership Conferences where the Chief Executive, Extended Leadership Team and Senior Managers from across the Council can work together on strategic issues and moving the organisation forward.





In 2018 Management Conferences were introduced bringing middle managers together with the Chief Executive within their locality to focus on organisation-wide and area working with 600 staff now reached.

We recognise that the Council's greatest assets are our staff, and improving engagement with staff is an area of focus. Improving employee engagement is one of 3 main themes in the Council's Workforce Plan. The new employee engagement framework was developed with input from staff and is focused on creating a culture which is open, honest and supportive and ensuring employees feel valued, respected and motivated.

Implementing the engagement framework includes a range of approaches used by the senior leadership team. These include:

- Regular blogs for staff from the Chief Executive and from the Executive Directors
- Drop-in sessions where staff can go for a coffee with their Executive Director in their workplace or in their area for informal conversation and feedback

- The Ask Katherine email that all staff can use to provide feedback or ask questions to the Chief Executive
- Increased visibility of senior leaders 'on the floor' in offices across the county
- Work shadowing frontline staff on their day to day activities to experience more about what teams under their responsibility do

Key strategies and programmes are developed with input from staff at all levels. For example, engagement through workshops with frontline staff and service managers has been a critical factor in developing the Council's Customer Strategy and its delivery.



**Focused on creating a culture which is open, honest and supportive and ensuring employees feel valued, respected and motivated.**

## Future Ambitions



- Maintain momentum and accelerate delivery of change through new leadership structures
- Embed new ways of working throughout the Council and promote innovation and creativity
- Continue to develop and respond to engagement with staff
- Improve use of real-time information and analytics to support management and decision-making





# Capacity to Deliver

**The Council is working hard to ensure we have the right capacity in the right place to deliver the outcomes we have set out in the Council Plan. We, like other local authorities, face significant financial and recruitment challenges; however, we are taking proactive approaches and working in different ways to change the organisation so that we can meet these challenges. We are investing in our staff and celebrating success. The Council's role is changing and we are focusing more on collaboration and leveraging resources into the county.**

## **Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do**

Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do underpins ways of working. Last year, we agreed a new Customer Strategy and are now in year 2 of delivery. We are making good progress in improving services and processes so that customers enjoy a better experience.

Making sure staff have the skills they need, the right communication and signposting channels are in place, and making systems and contact methods simpler for customers to access and more efficient are central to this improvement work. Major programmes of work are progressing with some early positive results.

We have put a range of learning and training in place and all members of staff are completing face to face training or e-learning modules. Ensuring every member of staff completes learning in customer service skills demonstrates the organisational commitment to our customers.

Staff engagement at all levels is a major factor in getting this right, and we have had positive feedback from staff involved to date who share their insights and suggestions for



improvement. A programme of opportunities to support Members in their community leadership role is being developed as customer and digital champions.

Making better use of customer insight to inform service development and decision-making is the other key part of improvement plans in respect of customer experience. We are making some steps forward and are committed to this as an area of focus to deliver early improvements.

## Digital Transformation

A critical part of improving the customer experience is expanding our digital offer and access to digital services. The Council is delivering an ongoing programme of service redesign delivering digital solutions. We have ambitious plans in this area and, over the last year particularly, we have accelerated activity.

We now have the robust building blocks in place which enables us to move forward more quickly improving services and giving customers more choice. Last year we launched a new Council website and we have a new digital platform designed specifically to support services. We are now building on these and we are making significant progress faster, but we recognise that this is long-term work and, with new technological solutions becoming available all the time, there's much more we can do.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

We recognise that preventing problems from occurring and intervening early when they do occur is the best way to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities. It enables people to live more independently for longer and communities to become more resilient. The Council is placing a major emphasis on investing leadership, effort and resources into prevention and early intervention activity. This has its challenges and we know that many of the benefits of the work we are doing now – in collaboration with partners and with communities – will not be felt for a long time. At the same time, we are providing complex and intensive support to those who need it and demand for these services is rising.

It is important that people have access to the tools, information, advice and resources to enable them to self-help when they can and there is activity across the Council and with partners to support this. Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is focusing more on community-based preventative work, as the demand for fire response reduces over time.



Fire and Rescue Service officers carry out an extensive programme of Safe and Well visits working with people in their homes to identify and address risks to their safety and wellbeing.

We are also working to link this up more with other preventative activity in communities, for example, the work of the 28 Health and Wellbeing Coaches based in the Council's locality public health teams who provide a range of support, advice and information, signposting and referrals to support people who need low-level help to stop issues from escalating. Help and support is provided addressing a range of issues such as mental health, hoarding behaviour, social isolation, and healthy eating.

There is a significant opportunity to drive this holistic approach to the wellbeing of individuals and families forward to achieve greater impact both in the short-term and longer-term. We are also making progress in improving our information, advice and guidance offer by digital and other channels to make self-help even easier.

Promoting independence through more intensive interventions to reduce demand is also a major strategy to manage demand more effectively and promote longevity of good health and wellbeing. The ambition for our Promoting Independence Programme is to embed ways of working that will prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal interventions, and ensure that our responses will support individuals (and carers/families) to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

As part of this work we are investing in a reshaped Adult Social Care structure, with additional resources, to help create the foundations for transforming social care services to better meet current and future need. This will ensure that the most vulnerable people we work with are kept safe, whilst we work collaboratively with stakeholders to design and test out new, strength based ways of working that will benefit all our people including our workforce, including

- Improved allocation and case load management arrangements;
- Improved supervision arrangements and peer support; and,
- Increased opportunities for multidisciplinary working – working on an area basis and bringing together Area Managers, Community Development professionals, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Health and Wellbeing Coaches, and community and voluntary sector organisations.

By working in this way, we will ensure we are recognising and making best use of the talents, knowledge and expertise within our organisation to ensure we are consistently achieving outcomes that truly promote independence, and reduce the risk of premature admissions to hospital or other formal services.



**We will ensure we are recognising and making best use of the talents.**



By doing this, we will ensure we are recognising and making best use of the talents, knowledge and expertise within our organisation to ensure we are consistently achieving outcomes that truly promote independence, and reduce the risk of premature admissions to hospital or other formal services.

Working with our system partners, the third sector and local communities we are developing Integrated Care Communities. There are 8 Integrated Care Communities established across West, North and East Cumbria, and 5 across the South Cumbria. These are based on populations of 30 to 50 thousand and groups of GP practices.

Whilst there are different approaches in the north and the south of the county, the principles underpinning the development are the same - building robust relationships, making the best use of resources across the system and working together in ways that support better health and social outcomes for the people of Cumbria.

Our model is person-centred and strength-based, fostering positive action as a fundamental element of individual rights, choice and control. We explicitly recognise the risk to a person's independence associated with hospital admission and institutional care.

Health and social care professionals are working together with local GPs, the voluntary sector and the community as one team to better understand the challenges that each area faces, provide more care out of hospital and in the community, support people to manage their own health and wellbeing and mobilise communities to support prevention activities. To fully understand the make-up of their communities in terms of profile, current and future health and wellbeing needs, Integrated Care Communities are using the mini-Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which has been produced for each area.



## Working Together

We are using the Council's long track record of effective collaboration to maximise the contribution to leveraging resources into the county to deliver shared ambitions and community aspirations. We already work with community and voluntary and public sector partners in support of bidding processes, and provide vital capacity in the county as Accountable Body to enable other organisations to secure and manage resources.

The Council has a strong tradition of supporting the growth of social enterprise across Cumbria contributing to the local economy. The first Social Enterprise Town in the World is Alston, and in the last year Cumbria has been awarded Social Enterprise County status by Social Enterprise UK. This award recognises the success of the Social Enterprise Support Programme funded by the Council which supports over 60 local businesses.

So we have excellent foundations to build on and we are beginning to be proactive in lobbying and securing funding in other areas including children's services and adult social care to support transformation programmes, successfully securing innovation funding. This is something we are committed to doing more of.





## Maximising the potential of our staff

Investing in our staff underpins our ambitious plans to work in new ways to improve outcomes. The Workforce Plan which supports the delivery of the Council Plan provides the framework for how we plan to make sure that staff are healthy and feel valued, that staff have the skills and tools they need to make their contribution to Council aspirations and work in new ways, and to feel listened to and empowered to be creative and propose innovative solutions.

There is a strong sense of commitment and purpose from staff, and through staff engagement and managers conferences there has been good feedback that staff are feeling positive about what they do. Ofsted also recognised the commitment and positivity of staff in their report on improvement in services for looked after children in January 2018.

We focus on celebrating success organisation-wide through management and leadership conferences, and the Council's annual excellence awards which have been revitalised

to be more inclusive and are now area-based. On a one to one basis, we have launched a new approach to appraisals for all staff which is strengths-based and focuses on a continuous conversation rather than an annual set-piece event. This enables an ongoing approach to celebrating achievements, capturing learning and using this to support continuous improvement.

We are promoting coaching approaches to support staff and their development, and are putting a training programme in place for staff to acquire coaching skills and become coaches to other staff.

The wellbeing of staff is at the heart of workforce planning. We have a renewed focus on health safety and wellbeing at all levels within the organisation putting robust reporting and management structures in place so that issues can be identified quickly and addressed, supported by a communications programme promoting the message that health and safety is everyone's responsibility.

We have also recruited Workplace Wellbeing Champions across the organisation to promote wellbeing peer-to-peer and provide information, advice and signposting. We run a programme of campaigns for staff promoting activities to improve health and wellbeing. There is a focus on mental health included in our approach. The Council signed the Mental Health Charter earlier this year and have a network of Time to Change champions in the Council.



## Case Study



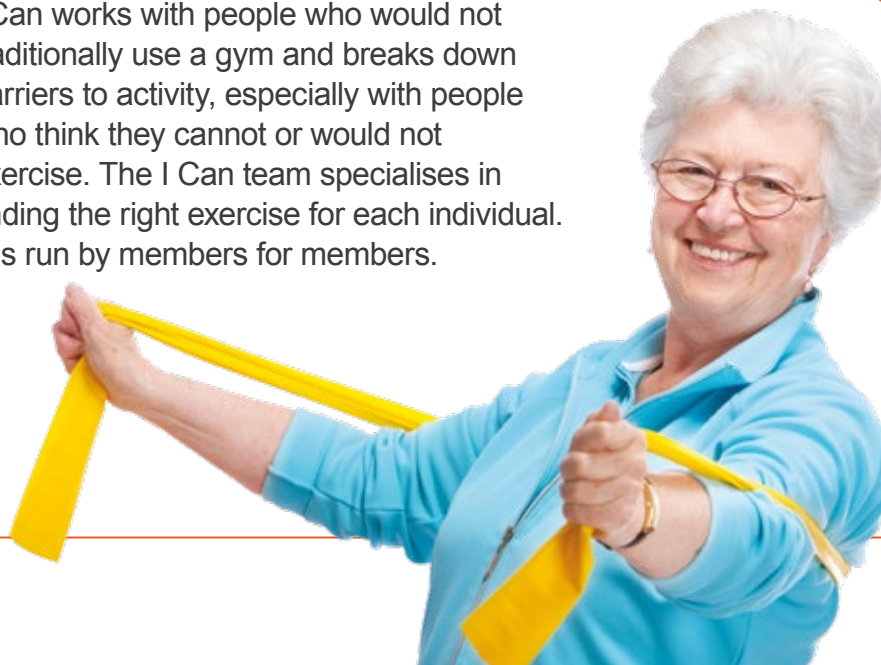
## Supporting Social Enterprise – I Can Health & Fitness Centre, Carlisle

**The Council's work with I Can began in 2015 through a small grant to support their recovery from Storm Desmond in 2015. I Can is now a registered Community Interest Company and was supported by the Council via the Social Enterprise Start-Up and Networking contract. This is delivered under contract from the Council on behalf of the Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership (CSEP).**

The Council has provided a range of support. The Carlisle Area Team helped the company to find more suitable premises which has allowed them to expand the classes and services they offer.

In 2018 I Can was Highly Commended in the Social Enterprise of the Year in the CSEP awards and 2 of the company's co-directors have been awarded Social Entrepreneur of the Year in the last 2 years.

I Can works with people who would not traditionally use a gym and breaks down barriers to activity, especially with people who think they cannot or would not exercise. The I Can team specialises in finding the right exercise for each individual. It is run by members for members.



## Case Study



## Better Health at Work

**Cumbria County Council was awarded the Better Health at Work Gold Award in January 2019 in recognition of the focus placed on activity to improve health and wellbeing.**

In awarding the Gold Level, there were some particular factors highlighted including:

- Senior leadership's commitment and the integration of workplace health and wellbeing in the Council Plan and Workforce Plan
- A clear organisational commitment to mental health
- An exemplar approach to providing for time-off from work for medical screening
- The range of events held both within and outside of the Council
- The opportunities taken to join-up campaigning activity with key events and projects in the county – for example, work supported by the Council's health advocates which resulted in people participating in over 70 cycling events linked to the Tour of Britain in Cumbria

We are now working towards the next award level – Continuing Excellence.



This focus on health and wellbeing in the workplace has also contributed to progress in addressing the issue of high levels of sickness absence within the Council. Over the last 3 years we have reduced sickness absence from 13.21 days per year lost per full time employee to 12.49. This has been achieved through improved analysis of patterns of absence and behaviours, absence clinics and regular performance management meeting with managers, targeted support provided to managers and employees, and improved links with occupational health services. We retain a focus dealing with long-term sickness to drive down sickness absence rates further.



## Growing our own

The Council has significant recruitment challenges in some areas including social care, project and programme management, legal and other professional disciplines. This is particularly acute in the Fire and Rescue Service who face challenges in the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters due to the changing demography and the rural nature of communities in Cumbria. In response we have implemented a number of 'grow your own' approaches, alongside creative recruitment approaches to attract the best staff to the Council.

We have a successful apprenticeships programme which has achieved national recognition – for people entering employment

with the Council and existing staff wishing to develop their skills and experience – as well as working with Cumbria LEP to improve skills and employment opportunities across the whole county. The range of e-learning opportunities for staff is extensive and continues to be expanded, and is aligned with Council outcomes and ways of working.

The Social Work Academy – established in 2015 in conjunction with the University of Lancaster – has been successful with 81 graduates to date. This innovative approach to “growing our own” is something we can build on in collaboration with others – including through the Council’s leadership of the workforce programme for the county’s health and wellbeing system.



The range of e-learning opportunities for staff is extensive and continues to be expanded.

## Future Ambitions



- Now we have the right digital platforms in place, accelerate the redesign of services to provide better access and choice to customers and increase the efficiency of services
- Use our experience and capacity to help secure the external resources needed to improve outcomes in collaboration with others
- Work towards achieving Continuing Excellence in Better Health at Work
- Continue to develop creative recruitment and 'grow our' own' approaches to meet current and future workforce needs



# Financial Planning and Viability

Cumbria County Council has a long track record of good financial management, delivering a balanced budget, and on securing benefits for Cumbria as a major part of the local economy. We have made substantial savings over the last 8 years and have more to make over the coming years – but we are also working differently to make sure the Council is financially sustainable in the long-term.

## An efficient Council

We have successfully made savings of £249 million over the last 8 years, and have plans in place to achieve at least a further £47 million within the next 3 years. We have done this in ways which have limited the impact on frontline services – through staff reductions, being more efficient, implementing new contracts for services, astute financial management and seeking new commercial opportunities.

Financial management is well integrated with performance and risk management – enabling us to be proactive, agile and innovative in planning how we maximise the benefit from the resources we have, and responding to opportunities to attract more resources and to invest to improve outcomes.

Now we are building on these foundations to secure the Council's financial future so that we will be here to provide services, with partners, for those who need them in the years to come. The Medium Term Financial Plan sets out our financial plans. It is fully integrated with the vision, outcomes and ways of working set out in the Council Plan, and with the Council's Workforce Plan.



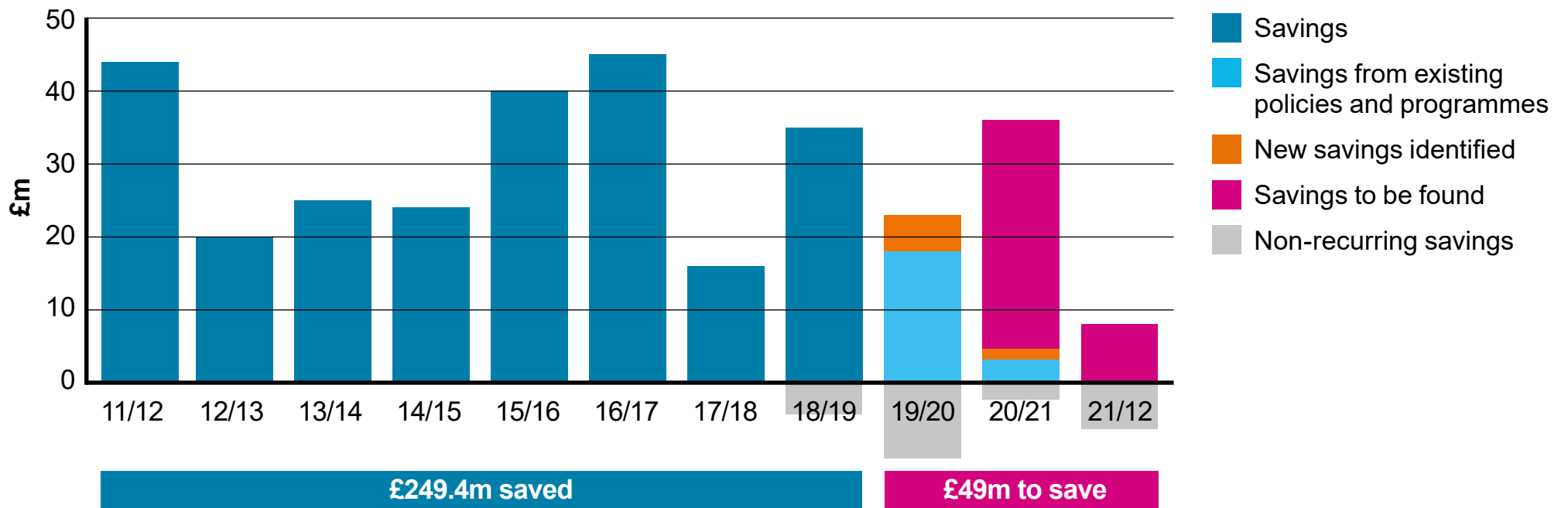


We recognise; however, that we need to move forward on long-term financial planning over the coming months.



We have successfully made savings of £249 million over the last 8 years.

### Savings since 2011/12



## Investing in our communities

We may be facing financial constraints, but we are prioritising investment in communities more than ever. In 2011/12, the core grant we received from the government to support council services was £159 million – in 2019/20 this has reduced to £18 million and will stop all together in 2020/21. In this context our capital programme has increased over the last 5 years. We have actually doubled capital investment since 2014. We understand that if we are to improve services and support communities we have to invest early to experience the benefits later on.





We are prioritising investment in communities more than ever.





## Case Study



# Capital investment to improve outcomes

**Campus Whitehaven brings together St Benedict's Secondary School, Mayfield Special School, and a host of sporting facilities for community use onto one new state of the art campus. The campus will be formally opened on 2 July this year.**



The aim of the £30 million investment from Cumbria County Council, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Sellafield Ltd and the Copeland Community Fund is to help encourage a local well educated, capable and dynamic workforce that can take advantage of the opportunities that are offered in the area.

These opportunities includes the Nuclear Decommissioning projects and their supply chain, and all the myriad of technical careers that are fostered by nuclear technology. In conjunction with this, the development of large scale all-weather sports facilities within the Campus provide a resource for the whole community.

The Council successfully managed the delivery of this ambitious project as part of the partnership that came together with a shared vision.



The development of the Campus provides an opportunity to transform the teaching and learning environment within Whitehaven and enhance the delivery of an enriched curriculum. The new campus will support the sharing of specialist services whilst allowing both schools to retain their individual ethos. The development will also reduce the running and maintenance costs of the schools.



Investment to modernise services is absolutely key to our financial strategy. The Council's ambitions to maximise the potential of digital technology in service delivery is supported by an ICT plan and investment in the ICT infrastructure to enable the technology to be used – including roll-out of new technologies and digital platforms.

In the last year alone we have made substantial progress in modernising residential care in the county with brand new care homes designed to meet the most complex needs, supported by a focus on working with partners to increase the provision of suitable extra care and supported housing to enable people to live independently for as long as possible knowing that there are state of the art care home facilities if they need them. We now have 3 new facilities across the county.

### **An enterprising Council**

Our new ways of working emphasise efficiency and enterprise. We recognise that not only do we need to be as efficient as possible, we need to be enterprising and generate more income to be financially sustainable as the local

government funding model changes radically over the next 2 to 3 years.

We are pursuing more opportunities to generate income from the buildings and other assets we own, to the delivery of services for others, and to our investments. All opportunities are assessed with the aim of delivering outcomes set out in the Council Plan – not enterprise for enterprise sake. We are mindful to ensure risks are robustly managed whilst also understanding that we need to be creative and may fail knowing that we will learn from this. This is about testing things out, trying different things, then expanding and building on the things that do work. This means that progress is gradual – not a big bang approach. So we are beginning to make a difference – and we are putting the tools in place that will allow us to scale up and embed a culture of enterprise across services for the long-term. We will be able to make a real impact on the resources available to support communities and improve services for the future.

We recognise the Council's role as a major commissioner of goods and services in the county and the importance of securing

value for money in commissioning and procurement activity. We are also, through our Sustainable Procurement Strategy, supporting local economic growth and delivering social value. Over a quarter of the Council's commissioned spend is with Cumbrian small and medium sized enterprises.

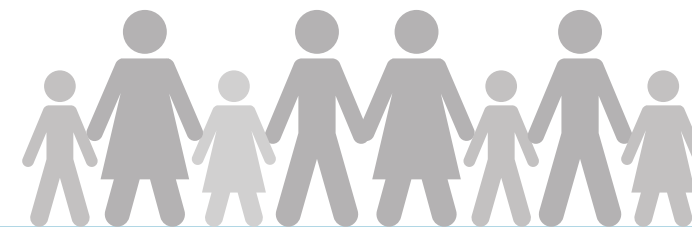
## **Future Ambitions**

- Build on medium term plans to focus on long-term financial planning
- Deliver and continue to develop capital investment programmes to support new ways of working and improved services
- Embed an enterprise culture across the Council, empowering all staff to think creatively about investing for the future



# Area Working and Supporting Thriving Communities

Cumbria County Council has a long tradition of area working with well-established Local Committees and area teams working on relationships at a local level and community development. We are now moving this on to the next level by embedding area working approaches within the Council's strategic planning and across all service areas. Strength-based approaches are central to this renewed focus on the Council's role at local level as the Council provides collaborative leadership through better co-ordination and developing a new relationship with communities. Local Members are leading the Council's area working through strengthened Local Committees, and are supported as community leaders being a voice for their community into Council decision-making.



The Council's role at community level used to have a focus on delivery of some 'community-based' County Council run services in that area, e.g. the local library and maintenance of local roads, alongside some community development expertise and grant-giving to local groups and residents through locally-based 'area teams'. We are now clear that area working is the business of the whole Council - that we look at all the decisions and actions we take from an area perspective. We have always recognised that each area of a large county like Cumbria is different – now we are making sure the Council is truly responsive to local circumstances, local strengths and assets, and local need and aspirations.



This means that the Council plays a different role and works with different partners in different places. Overall, we recognise that we are not solely a deliverer of services anymore – our most important role is often co-ordinating conversations or activity in an area, or playing a smaller part in a community-led project or activity led by another organisation.

We are now thinking differently - focusing on relationships, making connections, developing creative solutions with residents and partners, and the impact on each individual community. We've been working with the district councils for a long time on local infrastructure and spatial planning through the delivery of the infrastructure in the district Local Plan, for example, but now we see a real opportunity of better connect the physical place with the community that lives and works in that place in the design and delivery of public services.



We are putting the things in place to help us work in this way better – we have strengthened the role of the long-established Local Committees through a review of their Terms of Reference completed at the end of last year, we are developing performance reporting and management at area level so that we understand how we are performing in each area and can take action based on what each community needs us to do, and service teams are communicating and working together better at local level.



We recognise that we have a really strong tradition of area working to build on – but we also recognise that fully embedding these area working approaches takes time and effort. We've realised substantial benefits for communities and for public services through area working in the past, and understand the potential to transform outcomes by going further. That is why this is a focus for us – at the core of planning for the future.

### **Partnership working at local level**

To achieve the potential benefits of fully embedding area working approaches, we recognise that working with others is essential. Working in partnership is vital to everything we do as a Council and it is one of the things people say they value the Council for. We are working to renew or develop the new partnerships at community level needed to deliver on shared aspirations for each community, for example recently in Barrow collaboration between the Council and the Police has flourished around solutions to specific issues in the area, whilst close by in





South Lakeland collaboration between the Council and local Health partners has made real progress in supporting local people to remain healthier for longer, e.g. the community in Ulverston becoming a Healthy Town.

The Council is playing an increasingly significant role in the wider health and care system. The establishment of integrated care systems and of 17 integrated care communities across both the West, North and East Cumbria system and the Morecambe Bay system (which includes South Cumbria) is a vital part of driving forward integration. The Council is responding to different approaches and pace across the county.



**We are now clear that area working is the business of the whole Council.**

## Case Study



## Asset based development

**The residents of Cockermouth can now access a range of services at the Cockermouth library building rather than across four different sites in the town.**

Whilst considering future options for the town, it became clear that there were opportunities to work in partnership with the Town Council and District Council to look differently at how and where services were delivered in the town.

Cockermouth Town Council expressed an interest in taking over ownership of the library building due to its excellent positioning on the main street. Cumbria County Council has a well-established Community Asset Transfer scheme in place for the transfer of land and

property and under this scheme the Council's Cabinet with support of the Local Committee agreed to transfer the library building to Cockermouth Town Council. Engagement on the proposed transfer included holding drop-in session in the library building where concerns or questions could be discussed.

The Council continues to provide professional library support to the library. The Town Council was able to move the Tourist Information Centre into the building. Allerdale Borough Council was able to move services from their previous portacabin location into the library.

Cumbria County Council has saved on building and staffing costs – approximately £50,000 a year. The Town Council and Allerdale Borough Council have secured benefits through relocation of services in the town.



Most importantly, people living and visiting Cockermouth receive more accessible services in a single, central location.

Better, more efficient services in one the county's key towns has been achieved by the three councils working together, building good relationships and seizing opportunities to improve services.



We have delivered real results over the past decade by focusing on the best use of the Council's properties and land – our assets – in each local area. Now we are expanding that definition of 'asset' to consider and help develop the whole range of assets or strengths within each community.

Communicating how we will work with others and what the strength-based approaches we are using means for how we do things and the role we play is important. We have begun to communicate with partners and communities about this and need to continue to do this with consistent messages, and share the experiences, learning and achievements as things progress.



## Community focus

Helping communities to thrive is a major focus for the Council and we have put capacity in place to drive change – how we talk to and work with the communities we are here to support.

Across the county we are reconnecting with community and voluntary sector organisations about how we work together to improve outcomes for people in their communities, and how we can develop together new models of working with communities. We are considering how the whole range of capacity and resources available to a community – of which the Council's resources are only a part – can best be deployed to meet the community's own aspirations.

This is not just about financial resources, but about the physical, social, environmental and economic resources within each community. To do this successfully puts an ongoing conversation between residents and organisations front and centre – we understand this and have achieved real successes in some local areas. We also understand that

we need to do more across all parts of the county and so are establishing some further pathfinder projects over the next 12 months which are about pushing some boundaries of the way we work and testing new approaches.

## Ambitions

- Focus on further improving co-ordination of services and collaboration with others at an area level
- Learn from pathfinder projects to develop new models and ways of working with, and within, communities
- Continue the ongoing conversation with the communities we serve and with partners
- Use strength-based approaches across the Council to improve outcomes



# Peer Challenge - areas of focus

**The Council is in the second year of delivering the current Council Plan which set out a renewed emphasis on improving outcomes, and on changing the way we work. This Corporate Peer Challenge is at the right time to test out what we have achieved to date, and whether we have the focus and capacity in place to achieve over the next 2 and a half years and beyond.**

We have added an additional key line of enquiry to the LGA framework to reflect the Council's area focus – Area Working and Supporting Thriving Communities.

We have ambitious plans – for the future of the Council, and for improving outcomes for everyone in Cumbria – and we recognise that achieving our ambitions is not easy and won't happen overnight. In this context, we would particularly value the assessment, insight, advice and ideas of the Peer Challenge team on:

- The approach to area working – are they clear and embedded and making a real impact in communities?
- Does the Council have the right focus and capacity in place to deliver the changes we need to make to achieve improved outcomes?
- Based on what has already been achieved – are the areas of future focus the right ones?







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